

A *Struggle for Survival*

JOHN PAUL II CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LUBLIN
Chair of Dutch Language and Literature



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A Struggle for Survival

The Continuity of Catholic Religious Literature in Holland:
The Example of Delft (1450-1650)



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On the cover: The Triumph of Christ (c. 1581-c. 1623), an engraving by Johann Theodor de Bry after a design by Titian (Courtesy of Rijksprentenkabinet, Amsterdam). The triumphal pageant of Christ in De Bry's etching begins with Adam and Eve and the Patriarchs, Noah, David and the kings of the Old Testament. The Prophets are accompanied by the Sibyls (the latter were believed to have heralded the birth of Christ to the Gentiles). St. John the Baptist is carrying the Cross. Christ, shown in the center seated on a triumphal chariot, is followed by the Saints (Apostles, Martyrs and Confessors) who complete this image of the history of the Church. The historical unity and continuity of the Roman Catholic Church, symbolized by this procession, was a recurrent literary theme in the work of Joannes Baptist Stalpart van der Wiele (1579-1630), a priest-poet from Delft, and of other Catholic religious writers from the early-modern Netherlands

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INTRODUCTION

By the time the twenty-eight year old Dirck Evertsz van Bleyswijck (1639-1681) came to the end of the first part of his *Beschryvinge der stadt Delft* ('Description of Delft'; Delft: Arnold Bon, 1667), he still met people who, he hoped, would furnish him with the required historical documents. It was entirely unpredictable where and when new sources might emerge. Once walking into the house of 'a good family' in Delft, he saw displayed on the wall a leaf of parchment in a little frame with 'some little refrains' in fine Gothic minuscule about the construction of the tower of Delft's New Church.¹ Unfortunately for him, this manuscript, dating probably from the late 14th / early 15th century, was not a new item but similar to the one that he already had in his possession.

The 'little refrains' that Van Bleyswijck discovered in a private home are direct evidence of the 'lost history' ('verdwaelde Historie')² of Delft's Catholic past – manifested in its literature, history, identity and traditions – and of its survival in later centuries. More specifically, this incident can serve as a metaphor of the changing fortunes of Catholic religious literature in Delft. After the watershed year 1572, which marked the beginning of Protestant domination in Holland, a thriving Catholic literary life, of which these refrains might be called a visible reminder, became relegated to a semi-concealed existence in the private homes of Catholics or Catholic sympathizers. And yet it would be misleading to see this incident as the full picture. The Catholic religious literature of Delft was more than simply a collection of texts, some of which might have been hung in a frame, and others hidden away in archives or private collections.

¹ 'Noch onlangs deser dagen sagh ick by seecker eerlijck huysgesin / die oude Refereyntjes van 't opbouwen des Nieuwe-Kercks-Toorn [...] met en kunstigh handt-geschrift in een Bortetje te pronck hangen'. Cited after: Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stadt Delft*, 'Na-reden', p. [A v]. All translations in the present study, unless stated otherwise, are by the author (M.P.).

² *Ibid.*

At all times the Catholic religious literature of Delft was sustained by individuals, for instance the author of these refrains, their readers, or the family who preserved them. This literature owed its existence to a ceaseless exchange of ideas, to a transmission of texts and themes, to communication between groups and individuals, between networks of producers of literature (authors, printers, copyists, etc.) and networks of consumers (readers, listeners, singers, etc.). The production (and re-production) of literature as well as its reception were not autonomous processes either, but have to be situated within the broad sphere of Christian (and specifically, for the literature that we have in mind here, Roman Catholic) religious culture. It was a sphere that included, but was not limited to, theological thought, and pastoral as well as devotional practice. Finally, the literary life of Catholics did not take place in a vacuum, but it relied on a complex social and material infrastructure, comprising churches and religious institutions, libraries, private homes, scriptoria and printing workshops – all of which had their own place in the ‘microcosm’ of the medieval/early-modern city of Delft.

Over a period of two hundred years, between c. 1450 and c. 1650, the Catholic literature of Delft underwent consecutive stages of growth, crisis and (to a certain extent) rebirth. All this occurred in the face of relentless social, political and cultural change, and amidst alternating periods of stability and turmoil. Yet despite a number of setbacks (the most radical of which occurred after 1572 with the prohibition of the public practice of the Catholic religion, the confiscation of churches and the closure of monasteries), the Catholic religious literature of Delft displayed a surprising continuity, not only surviving, but even attaining a small ‘Golden Age’ of its own in the first decades of the 17th century. It will be the object of this study to document this struggle for survival by presenting a broad synthesis of the production and reception of Catholic religious literature in Delft situated in the relevant historical and cultural contexts.

State of Research. Later-medieval or early-modern literature from Delft has not yet been the subject of comprehensive monographic literary-historical research. Such broad areas as the manuscript literature read and written in Delft, the nature of the publishing output of the Delft printers, or the impact of the Roman Catholic Church on the literary culture of Delft in the period before the Dutch Revolt, still remain largely unexplored, apart from studies where these areas are subordinated to some larger scholarly investigation, for instance of manuscript illumination or of early printing in the Netherlands. Such research, however, is informed by the methodology of its discipline (e.g. art his-

tory or book history). For this reason, it does not present the diachronic literary-historical perspective that is necessary for establishing the continuity of certain (e.g. religious) themes or phenomena (e.g. the survival and evolution of literary networks) within a longer time-frame in a single geographic locality. On the other hand, the existing specific studies of later-medieval or early-modern literature from Delft published to this date have dealt solely with certain selected aspects of local literature. The vernacular literature of the rhetoricians (*rederijkers*), for instance, in Delft has been the subject of two detailed monographs by M.C.A. van der Heijden and A.F.Th. van Boheemen, *De Delftse rederijkers "Wy rapen gheneucht"* (1982) and, in the relevant chapters, *Met minnen versaemt* (1999). By the same authors are two useful surveys of literature in Delft during the Middle Ages and the Dutch Golden Age (1981). Although these articles provide much important information, the concise summary they provide does not exhaust this extensive subject-matter.

Furthermore, to this date there has been no consistent monographic research into the history of Catholic religious literature in Delft. In the research that had been done, some aspects of Catholic religious literature were examined, yet this literature was not adequately situated in a longer time-frame that would allow the researcher to determine its character, continuity and internal cohesion. In particular, although the figures of Delft's religious poets – Martinus Duncanus, Cornelis Musius, Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele – have been the subject of detailed biographies and/or monographs, their work was only incidentally placed within the broad perspective of the Catholic religious literature written in Delft, Holland and the Netherlands; instead, this research was generally restricted to a single author and to a dominant literary-historical paradigm, such as humanism, the Renaissance or the Counter-Reformation. Where the city itself was the point of departure, the available information, from the point of view of literary history, was not entirely complete either. Passing mention of Catholic religious literature was made in a number of books on the history of Delft or its religious and civic institutions (e.g. in several detailed monographs by D.P. Oosterbaan and others). However, the image of literary life provided in these publications was only secondary to the material or social history of the institutions which their authors set out to describe, and by no means complete or systematic. Therefore, although these monographs often constitute an invaluable documentary reference, especially with regard to the material infrastructure (churches, monasteries, etc.) and social environment of literary life, they are by no means conclusive as a source of information on the literary activities in the city.

Methodology. One way of looking at literature is to see it as a system of processes and participants. On the side of processes we have the production and reception of literary texts. None of these processes, however, exist without their participants: the specific individuals who are the producers and consumers of literature. On a wider scale, the participants in both of these processes can be seen as forming interconnected networks. These networks may reflect, for instance, personal relations, as in the case of a circle of individuals engaging in direct interpersonal contact or active in one locality during the same period of time. Alternatively, these networks may be based on relations of a literary and intellectual kind, by virtue of an individual's or group's affiliation with a particular community of ideas, for instance, when authors or readers have access to a shared fund of knowledge or to a common resource of literary themes. All factors informing the relations between the participants of such networks can be mentioned at this stage, ranging from the general (values, motivations, ideas) to the specific (literary conventions, themes, etc.). Of course, all typologies of literary networks schematically presented here are mutually non-exclusive and may exist at the same time; for descriptive convenience, therefore, the term 'literary network' will be used to denote the significant presence of such relations between the participants of the production and the reception of literature. Such a 'process- and participant-oriented' model of literature has been selected as the global blueprint for the study of Catholic religious literature in Delft.

The picture of the production and reception of literature acquires a greater level of detail when specific literary texts are considered. For the purpose of the present research a specific set of analytic and synthetic research procedures has been put in place to investigate the corpus of Catholic religious literature in Delft. In particular, these procedures will involve identifying:

- *textual relations* between texts written or read in Delft and the sources of these texts, their editions, origins, authorship, etc., and
- *thematic relations* between texts or families of texts in Delft and other texts related through an affinity of literary themes and ideas.

Furthermore, this research will comprise:

- a *reconstruction* of the circumstances of production and reception of a text or family of texts, supplemented by information from the fields of literary history, social history and other disciplines, and
- a *reconstruction* of the theological, philosophical or ideological notions that shaped the intellectual world of the authors or readers of a given text or family of texts.

This research framework is in parallel in some respects to the model outlined by the Dutch medievalist P. Wackers for studies in the area of later-medieval religious, moralizing and instructive literature, a category that is well-represented in the present study.³ Because the analytic procedures outlined above tend to overlap, similarly to Wackers' scheme, no hard boundaries have been drawn between them. Instead, the intention will be to reconstruct as completely as possible the picture of literary life in Delft using a combination of any number of these methods.

Sources. Such a perspective has determined that the sources of this research were selected with the aim of illustrating the nature of the literary processes taking place in Delft and of analyzing the involvement in those processes of specific participants, groups or interpersonal networks. Apart from sources that shed an 'external' light on Catholic religious literature in Delft, research has been carried out 'internally' within a corpus of religious texts produced (or re-produced) in Delft. The majority of texts examined in the present study roughly fall into the sub-categories of moralizing or instructive (parenetic), catechetical and devotional literature. The category of Latin texts has an important place in the picture of Delft religious literature, but it comprises a considerably lesser part of the corpus under investigation. The basis for this study will be formed, therefore, by texts written in the Netherlandish (Dutch) language (*Nederlands*), specifically in Middle Dutch or in 16th/17th century Dutch.

Structure. The point of departure for the present research is the notion that the study of literature, the study of social or political history, and the study of cultural history are interconnected in such a way and to such a degree that it is impossible to speak of any of these in isolation from the other two. Describing the literature of a given linguistically and geographically-determined community requires that one take note of the historical context and of the wider material as well as immaterial culture of the society within which it was created. Historical research too, is hardly imaginable without referring to literature, both as written sources and as expressions of a historical state of mind, or to culture in the widest sense of that term. Studying cultures, demands an intimate knowledge of its interplay with literature and history. The present re-

³ Wackers, "Buecken die men leest in scolen" *Middel nederlandse letterkunde en Latijnse traditie*, p. 111ff. Whereas Wackers proposes a research scheme based on textual relations (e.g. filiation), the relationship of themes and ideas between texts, and the reconstruction of the 'world of ideas' in a historical perspective, the framework of the present study additionally envisions a reconstruction of the circumstances of production and reception of literary texts as an integrated research procedure.

search into Catholic religious literature will be therefore combined with a wider historical narrative in which this literature will be analyzed as a continuous process embedded in specific historical and cultural contexts. Apart from the main synthetic literary-historical narrative, important literary networks and significant texts will be presented in the form of several 'case studies' analyzing the main research problems, literary and non-literary contexts, and reconstructing the broad circumstances of their historical reception.

The present study of the Catholic religious literature of Delft will take into account the cultural significance of the events which left their mark on that literature in its historical and cultural context. It also means that the meaning of these events shall be analyzed from a wider perspective than a purely local one, describing their relations, as required, to developments taking place simultaneously in the historical province of Holland (*gewest Holland*) as well as in the larger literary, cultural and historical space of the Netherlands (*Nederlanden*) – an area roughly comprising both the present-day Netherlands and Belgium (also referred to collectively as the Low Countries – *de Lage Landen*). Such an approach, wide in scope, is not without precedent. The authors of two recent studies of the literary life in Leiden have adopted a similar multi-level perspective. These studies are Herman Brinkman's *Dichten uit Liefde: Literatuur in Leiden aan het einde van de Middeleeuwen* (1997) and Johan Koppenol's *Leids heelal: Het loterijspel (1596) van Jan van Hout* (1998). Although differing in chronological range (the later Middle Ages or the Renaissance) and in their object of research (a collection of mainly religious texts or a comedy), both of these studies rely on similar methodological assumptions, for in both cases the authors have taken into consideration the contexts of literary history in the city and in the linguistic area of the Netherlands as well as the wider implications, on the one hand, of the history of culture and ideas, and on the other hand, of social or economic history at a local, regional and supra-regional level. No such wide-ranging research has yet been made of religious literary life in Delft, and therefore it is to be hoped that the present study will satisfy this need in this specific area.

The Catholic religious literature of Delft between the later Middle Ages and the Dutch Golden Age is embedded in the historical paradigms of Dutch literature. For this reason this synthesis of Catholic religious literature in Delft from its beginnings up to the 17th century will be narrated from a perspective that will shift from purely local events to large-scale ones, from Delft to the historical region of Holland (*gewest Holland*), and from there to the Low Countries as a cultural region of

Europe. It is only by placing the literary, cultural and historical developments that took place in Delft within a broader scheme of things that one can fully acknowledge the internal cohesion of the Low Countries as an area of the Europe where local autonomy and diversity have always interacted with a no less strong striving for unity.

Looking at the structure of the present study in greater detail, **Chapter 1** will present an overview of the evolution of religious literature in Delft from the later Middle Ages till approximately 1500. A background will be provided of the history of Holland and the Netherlands during the Middle Ages and, most especially, of the advance of Christianity in the lands between the estuaries of the Rhine and the Meuse, and the rise of Delft as a center of social, economic and cultural life in Holland (1.1.). Next, the appearance of networks of producers and consumers of literature will be analyzed, beginning with manuscript literature produced in Delft's scriptoria (1.2.) and ending with the rise of printing, which opened up new opportunities for the transmission of religious texts (1.3.).

Chapter 2 is the first of three case studies dealing with literary networks around a specific theme, in this case, the late-medieval devotion of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary in Delft and in the Netherlands. The questions posed by recent research into this devotion (2.1.) will be answered by means of a study of the continuity of late-medieval texts dedicated to the devotion of the Passion (2.2.) and of the co-existence of the latter, in the realm of religious practice and literature, with the devotion of the Seven Sorrows (2.3.). Next, a reconstruction of the theological and philosophical notions that informed the intellectual world of Jan van Coudenberghe, the main propagator of the Seven Sorrows devotion in the Netherlands, will provide an answer to the question, raised by some researchers, whether the devotion of the Seven Sorrows was mainly a 'political confession' created to bolster the position of the Habsburg dynasty (2.4.). After the devotion of the Seven Sorrows has been situated (with respect to its promotion of social cohesion) in the sphere of Netherlandish civic ethics as opposed to the dynastic aims of the court, the literary networks of the devotion will be presented – first in the Netherlands (2.5.), and then in Delft, where the priest Dirck Adamszoon corresponded with Jan van Coudenberghe to relate the miracles that happened through the intercession of the Virgin Mary (2.6.). These sections will highlight the continuity of the worship of the Seven Sorrows and the perseverance of its literary networks up to and beyond the years of the Dutch Revolt in Delft and the Netherlands.

Chapter 3 begins with the rise of Renaissance literature in Delft around 1500. The Renaissance manifested itself in the creation of new

identities based on classical literary sources. The Hollanders defined themselves as the descendants of the Batavians (e.g. in the writings of Erasmus), and at the hands of local humanists the name of Delft became identified with that of the ancient Delphi, the site of an oracle of Apollo (the *Pythia* or Sibyl of Delphi). This new identity entered the literature and pictorial art created in Delft. It gained a Christian dimension when the Sibyls, the oracular priestesses of antiquity, were placed alongside the Prophets of the Old Testament, since all were believed to have announced the coming of Christ to different peoples (3.1.). During the 16th and 17th century the literary association of Delft and Delphi was challenged by several (predominantly Protestant) humanists. Meanwhile, the Catholic priest Stalpart van der Wiele found a key to the re-evangelization of Holland in the traditional Christian interpretation of the Sybil-line oracle of the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil, according to which that text foretold the birth of Christ and announced the arrival of a 'Golden Age' of Christianity (3.2.). But for a few interruptions (including one major disaster – a fire that destroyed a significant part of Delft in 1536), the consolidation of existing networks of makers and readers of literature continued during the first decades of the 16th century (3.3.).

Chapter 4 presents the rise of Christian humanism (Erasmus) and the Reformation in a wide perspective, linking the events in Delft to developments in the Netherlands. The response of Delft's Catholic literary networks to the impending religious and political crisis of the mid-16th century is examined in the light of the activities of groups of writers and readers in the main centers of the town's literary life: the churches, monasteries and the Latin school.

Chapter 5 takes up the theme of the Dutch Revolt in the Netherlands and its impact on the local town community of Delft as a turning-point in the lives of Dutch Catholics (5.1.). The position of Catholics in the Dutch Republic was in many ways the by-product of a struggle among Protestant groups competing for mastery over the internal religious-political arena. The precarious balance reached by the parties to this conflict prevented Catholic worship from being suppressed entirely, but the results were still a far cry from authentic religious toleration (5.2.). To counteract the negative effects of the Revolt in the northern Netherlands new ecclesiastic structures had to be put in place. The Holland Mission (*Missio Hollandica*) was established in the late 16th century. Its early center was Delft, the native town of Sasbout Vosmeer, the first Vicar-Apostolic of Holland (5.3.).

Chapter 6 is a case-study of *Het leuen van die Heylighe ende waerdighe maecht Geertruyd van Oosten* (1589). This was a *vita* of Geertruyd

van Oosten, a medieval beguine mystic and stigmatic who, despite never having been canonized, was generally considered to be a saint by Delft's Catholics during the later-medieval and early-modern period. The authorship of this *vita*, plausibly attributed to Sasbout Vosmeer, is examined along with new evidence supporting this theory (6.1.). The complex networks of Counter-Reformation hagiographers and their relation to the various versions of this *vita* are unravelled next (6.2.), and hypotheses are formulated about the potential readers of this *vita*, based on text-intrinsic (6.3.) and text-extrinsic (6.4.) evidence. Then, the *vita* itself is analyzed as hagiographic literature with a pronounced moral (parenetic) and religious (catechetical) character (6.5.). Much previous scholarly debate on this *vita* concerned the issue of Geertruyd's surname 'Van Oosten'. Supposedly, the Delft beguine had been called 'Van Oosten' because she sang a song containing the word *oost* (East). For this reason the reception of the *vita* is situated in the context of religious song culture in the later-medieval and early-modern Netherlands (6.6.). Finally, the *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten, and most of all its reference to songs that had in fact been sung in cloisters and beguinages (though probably not by the historical Geertruyd van Oosten), offers convincing evidence of the continuity of religious literature transmitted by the members of Delft's Catholic communities before and after the Dutch Revolt (6.7.).

Chapter 7 introduces some of the new identities of Dutch nationhood that arose in the 17th century, during the period known as the Dutch Golden Age (an analysis of the ramifications of this term in the history of literature is presented at this point). These identities, born out of the new economic and religious-political mechanisms created after the Dutch Revolt, were propagated mainly by Protestant authors, for instance by Jan van der Veen, a widely-read Calvinist poet whose sonnet serves as the point of departure for this study (7.1.). Yet this new discourse of identity was not unanimously accepted, least of all by Roman Catholics. A counter-discourse was launched by Catholic authors, many of whom came from Delft or resided in that city. These Catholic voices, for instance those of Sasbout Vosmeer and Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele, were critical of the prevalent discourse of Dutch global trade or sought to revise that discourse as a less materialistic lesson in moral navigation (7.2.). Other literary voices subverted the discourse of the Netherlands as a 'promised land' of the Dutch Calvinists and other Protestants who regarded themselves as a 'chosen people'. One of the voices critical of this concept belonged to the Flemish polemical writer Arnout van Geluwe who had (re-)converted to Catholicism while living in Delft as an immigrant laborer in the first half of the 17th century (7.3.).

Chapter 8 offers a case study of the literary networks that arose around the priest Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele, a tireless propagator of Catholic religious literature in Delft during the first decades of the 17th century. Stalpart van der Wiele's work is associated with the concept of the Christian 'Golden Year', for which he was indebted not only to the Biblical 'sabbatical year' and to Messianic prophecies, but also to the classical *topos* of the 'Golden Age'. This chapter re-opens, therefore, the enquiry into the literary and cultural paradigms of the Dutch Golden Age in the study of literature and culture (8.1.) that had commenced in the previous chapter (7.). This is followed by an investigation into the literary realizations of the motif of a Golden Age (*aurea aetas*) in 17th century Dutch literature (8.2.). From the local perspective of Delft, the literary activities of Stalpart van der Wiele were part of the actions of priests and missionaries to revive the Catholic faith in the northern Netherlands, and in this respect these activities can be contrasted with the work of an immediate contemporary, the Delft-based Jesuit priest and religious author Ludovicus Makeblijde (8.3.). The literary output of Stalpart van der Wiele and Makeblijde can be situated within the large literary traditions of the Counter-Reformation but also within the 'smaller' tradition, outlined previously, of religious literature created for and by the members of the local Roman Catholic community of Delft (8.4.). In his prologue to the song-book *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi* (1628) Stalpart van der Wiele offered his readers a paradigm of a 'Christian Golden Age' based in equal measure on the Old Testament and on classical sources, especially the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil. This general concept of a 'Christian Golden Age' can be best described as a program for rebuilding Catholic religious identity in the northern Netherlands which owing to its nature could have been addressed not only to highly educated Catholics but also to classically-trained non-Catholic readers (8.5.).

Apart from the central literary-historical study, an addition to this research is offered in the form of a chronologically organized 'Survey of Incunables, Post-Incunables and Early Printed Books from Delft 1477-1572' (**Annex**). The items in the Survey are classified according to the categories and sub-categories of religious and secular literature. The pictorial material is presented, with commentary, in a **List of Illustrations**.

1. COPYISTS, PRINTERS AND READERS. CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS LITERARY NETWORKS AND THEIR INFRASTRUCTURE IN DELFT FROM THE LATER MIDDLE AGES TO 1500

1.1. DELFT – A CENTER OF SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL LIFE

The Dutch Golden Age, lasting from the late sixteenth till the late seventeenth century, brought into being the Dutch Republic whose seven provinces became a social, political and economic entity unlike any other on the European continent. The Dutch Revolt, a war fought for religious and political independence from the Catholic Habsburg empire, radically altered the position of the province of Holland (*gewest Holland*), which climbed up from rather humble origins as the somewhat peripheral territory of the medieval counts of Holland (*graafschap Holland*) to being the leading province of the fledgling Republic. Yet even long before the Dutch Revolt, which entered a decisive phase in Holland in 1572, the province had become an important economic and political hub in its own right, though nowhere as wealthy as the more strongly urbanized provinces of the southern Netherlands, in particular Flanders and Brabant. Because of the significance of the religious, social and historical context of the Netherlands to the understanding of Dutch literature, it will be worthwhile to first provide a concise perspective on the development of Holland before passing on to one of its major towns, Delft. In this and the next chapters, therefore, an account of the interplay of religious, socio-political and literary history will be given, at the levels of the town (Delft), the province (Holland), and the cultural-linguistic region (the Netherlands), in the period from the later Middle Ages till the beginning of the Dutch Golden Age.

The growth of the province of Holland can be roughly divided into several stages, the first occurring under the counts of Holland, Hainault and Bavaria (10th- early 15th century), the second under the dukes

of Burgundy (15th century), and the third under the house of Habsburg (16th century). The medieval period, especially from c. 1000 to c. 1300, is essential for understanding the Christian foundations of the culture and society of Holland. It is then that the low-lying areas of the estuaries of the Maas and (Old) Rhine became a permanent part of the ecclesiastical structures of the Church in the Low Countries. However, missionary activities to the Netherlands commenced much earlier. Already in the 2nd century A.D. the Roman writer Tertullian acknowledged the spread of Christianity to parts of *Germania*.¹ The oldest bishopric whose territorial reach extended over the Low Countries was founded in Cologne in the first half of the 4th century, shortly after Emperor Constantine visited this area in 313 A.D. The first bishop known to the area of the Low Countries, St. Servatius, was invested at Tongeren around 340 A.D. This bishopric was moved for safety to Maastricht during the Frankish raids in the 5th century. This fact remained in the memory of Christians living in the Maasland, for in the 11th century the Maastricht poet Hendric van Veldeke wrote a narrative life of Saint Servatius as a patron of that city. In the 8th century the bishopric of Maastricht was transferred to the city of Liège, where it remained for the rest of the medieval period.²

Missionary activity to the Low Countries intensified during the Frankish and Merovingian period. Around 630, Dagobert I (623-639), one of Chlodowech's successors in Austrasia, commissioned a small church or chapel to be built at the north-easterly fringe of his realm in Utrecht, a town that had previously been a Roman outpost.³ More to the south, along the river Scheldt, significant missionary activity was carried out by St. Amand. Around 640, travelling together with his companions, St. Amand conveyed the Christian faith to the inhabitants of Ghent. There he established churches that can be considered the predecessors of the later abbeys of St. Bavo and St. Peter.⁴

The Frankish kings generally favoured missionary activities as an effective way of extending their influence over the formerly Roman areas of the Low Countries lying in the estuary of the great rivers, the Scheldt, Meuse and Rhine. Their counterparts dwelling to the north of these rivers, the pagan rulers of Frisia, were not all entirely ill-disposed to Christianity, although they tended to give priority to contacts with missionaries from the more familiar cultural area of the North Sea. Fri-

¹ Romein, *Lage landen*, p. 56.

² Post, *Handboek van de kerkgeschiedenis*, vol. i, pp. 256-257.

³ Jansen, *Geschiedenis van de Middeleeuwen*, pp. 98-99.

⁴ Milis, 'A long beginning', p. 10.

sian count Aldgisl, for example, acting in defiance of a Frankish request, extended a friendly welcome to bishop Wilfrid of York, who was travelling to Rome in 678. Aldgisl gave the bishop official permission to preach to the Frisians.⁵ This was a sign of very early contacts with Christianity from the British Isles. Such contacts would become more frequent during the missionary activity of St. Willibrord (c. 658-739), 'Archbishop of the Frisians', an Anglo-Saxon missionary educated at the monastery of Ripon in Northumbria.

St. Willibrord travelled through the northern Netherlands in the last years of the 7th and beginning of the 8th century. After being consecrated as bishop in Rome, in 695, St. Willibrord set out in the company of twelve missionaries for *Frisia*, as the territories of the Netherlands were called during the Frankish period. Frankish king Pepin granted Willibrord the rights to the formerly Roman *castellum* in Utrecht, which was to become the seat of the future 'Frisian' archbishopric. The small chapel in Utrecht, which had survived from the time of Dagobert's involvement in Christianizing the Netherlands, was rebuilt and consecrated as the church of St. Salvator. Later a new church was built for the bishopric, consecrated to St. Martin of Tours, a popular saint among the Franks. After a spate of attacks by the Frisians St. Willibrord returned to the Netherlands around 719, when the region was once more in Frankish hands. Working from Utrecht he and his companions set out to establish new churches in the estuaries of the Maas, probably at Vlaardingen ('in pago Marsum'),⁶ the (Old) Rhine at Oegstgeest, in the region of the Vecht, the Kennemerland (Petten, Velsen, Heiloo), and even as far out in Frisia as the islands of Wieringen and Texel.⁷ A chapel affiliated to the church in Vlaardingen was built in the villages of Kethel and Overschie, about 10 kilometers to the south of Delft.⁸ The other important early missionary to the Frisians was St. Boniface, who arrived from England in 716. St. Boniface died a martyr's death when he and his companions were attacked by a group of Frisians near Dokkum in 754.⁹

After a Norman interlude a western area of Frisia, roughly along the coastline of the modern province of Holland, came into the hands of a line of Christianized nobles who, having acquired the title of count, were expected to pay homage to the Holy Roman emperors. In 922 Dirk

⁵ Bazelmans et al., 'Voorspel. Holland in het eerste millenium', p. 49.

⁶ Koch, Kruisheer, *Oorkondenboek van Holland en Zeeland tot 1299*, vol. i, p. 5.

⁷ Van Eijnatten, Van Lieburg, *Nederlandse religiegeschiedenis*, p. 51.

⁸ Mostert, 'Veelkleurige religie en zakelijk schriftgebruik', p. 151-153.

⁹ Post, *Handboek van de kerkgeschiedenis*, vol. ii, pp. 12-14.

I, count of Holland, founded a Benedictine abbey in Egmond. The patron of the abbey of Egmond was St. Adalbert, whose remains were reinterred there. For a long time Egmond was to remain the only abbey along the coast of the northern Netherlands until the founding of the Benedictine abbey of Rijnsburg in 1133. The abbey of Egmond fulfilled an important practical function for the counts of Holland as chancery and a center of written culture and learning throughout the medieval period.¹⁰

By the twelfth century Holland had secured a place of its own on the map of Western Christianity. The medieval Church largely preserved the territorial boundaries in the Netherlands which had been drawn up by the Roman administration several centuries earlier. And so, in the northern half of the Netherlandish-speaking area, the Roman province of *Germania Secunda* provided the administrative structure for an archbishopric whose seat was in the old provincial capital, Cologne, situated in the Holy Roman Empire. The bishop of Utrecht, a sufragan bishop of the church province of Cologne, had under his authority the Low Countries to the north of the great rivers (Holland together with eastern Frisia, Zeeland and parts of northern Flanders). Additionally, on a local level, the bishop of Utrecht exercised temporal jurisdiction over the areas called the Sticht, corresponding to the present-day province of Utrecht, and the Oversticht (Drenthe, Overijssel and the town of Groningen).¹¹ Some lands to the east of Holland and Frisia came under the bishoprics of, respectively, Münster and Osnabrück; parts of the southern fringe (Gelderland south of the Waal and northern Limburg) came under the bishopric of Cologne.¹²

Overseeing the southern half of the Netherlandish-speaking area, the archbishopric of Reims, a French royal see, was located in the former capital of the province *Gallia Belgica*.¹³ It controlled a large part of the southern Netherlands, which were divided up into the bishoprics of Cambrai (*Kamerijk*), Tournai (*Doornik*), Arras (*Atrecht*), and Théroutanne (*Terwaan*). The southern diocese of Liège (*Luik*), however, came under the archbishopric of Cologne. The bishopric of Liège extended far to the north, even covering northern Brabant and large parts of Limburg as well as the islands of present-day South Holland. Except for Utrecht,

¹⁰ Exhaustive studies of the abbey of Egmond as a center of writing can be found, e.g., in Vis et al. (eds.), *Heiligenlevens, annalen en kronieken* or Vis, Gumbert (eds.), *Egmond tussen Kerk en wereld*.

¹¹ Milis, 'Counts, Cities, and Clerics', p. 25.

¹² Romein, *De lage landen*, p. 47.

¹³ Geyl, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse stam*, vol. i, p. 28.

which was situated centrally in the areas under its bishop's pastoral care, the seats of most dioceses were located at the fringes or just outside the Dutch-speaking area, at an impractical distance from their centers.

The political position of the bishops, though seemingly a powerful one, was not to be envied. Although the concordat of Worms (1122) took away the emperor's prerogative to appoint bishops, the nominations were nevertheless subject to relentless pressure from secular rulers and networks of patronage both within and outside the church. As a worldly ruler, the bishop of Utrecht was caught in the middle between the demands of neighboring princes and those of the emerging urban elites; as a bishop, he had to negotiate between the Holy See and the demands of the powerful diocesan chapter of Utrecht, which formed an electoral college.¹⁴

The 'big six' towns that were the major players on the economic stage of Holland during the medieval period, were (in the customary order of their town rights): Dordrecht, Haarlem, Delft, Leiden, Gouda and Amsterdam. Most of these towns obtained town rights in the 13th century following a period of extensive land reclamation, drainage and dike-building throughout Holland (the so-called *Grote ontginning*). Delft traditionally ranked as the third oldest among the large towns in Holland (after Dordrecht and Haarlem). In its pre-urban stage Delft evolved out of the core settlement of a manorial estate belonging to the counts of Holland during the early 13th century. Delft received its city charter in 1246 from count William II when it was still essentially a village facing one of the drainage canals (the *Delf*) that transected a segment of newly-reclaimed agricultural land.¹⁵ It was from this canal and from the action of digging or 'delving' (*delven*) that the town took its name.¹⁶ Delft's civic rights were confirmed once again by Floris V in 1268 for the burghers of the older settlement of Oude Delf and extended to the inhabitants of a new area of the town (Nieu Delf). By that time Delft already had a church which had been founded by a landowning nobleman, Bartholomeus van der Made, around the year 1200, although the existence of a chapel on that site is believed to date from an even older

¹⁴ Eijnatten, Van Lieburg, *Nederlandse religiegeschiedenis*, pp. 109-110.

¹⁵ For the urban development of Delft in the context of the settlement of the nearby rural areas during the Middle Ages see esp. Dolk, *Geschiedenis van het hoogheemraadschap Delfland*; Niermeyer, *Delft en Delfland*; Raue, 'Ontstaan en plattegrond van de stad Delft', pp. 2-9; Raue, *De stad Delft*; Visser, *Delft in de middeleeuwen*; Visser, 'Het Delftse stadsplan', pp. 1-19; Winsemius, 'Delft en Hof van Delf', pp. 9-16.

¹⁶ Van Berkel, Samplonius, *Nederlandse plaatsnamen*, p. 44.

period. This was the Old Church (*Oude Kerk*) whose patron was St. Bartholomew and subsequently, from the late 15th c., St. Hippolyte. Later, the New Church (*Nieuwe Kerk*) whose patron was St. Ursula was built from 1383 to 1496.¹⁷

The administrative center of Delft in the 13th-century was a manor (*curtis*) with an agricultural infrastructure of barns, stables and store-houses, as well as workshops and housing for the families of artisans. In charge of the *curtis* was a *villicus*, an agent representing the counts of Holland. The location of the *curtis* corresponded to the present-day town hall (*Stadhuis*).¹⁸ Already at this early stage Delft had a hospice, the *Gasthuis* (1252). This early institution, possibly the first of its kind in Holland, was connected to the Norbertine monastery of Koningsveld (*Campus Regis*) near Delft. This monastery, founded in 1251 by Rikarde, aunt of William II, count of Holland and Holy Roman emperor, in turn evolved during the medieval period into a nunnery for women of noble birth.¹⁹

During the early-modern period the earliest history (or rather pre-history) of Delft was viewed through the prism of two significant events. The first of these events, attributed to the Romans, was the excavation of the Delf canal. The other was the construction of a fortified mansion on the site of the future town on the orders, it was believed, of Godfrey 'the Hunchback' of Lorraine (1040-1076) around the year 1070.

Early-modern Dutch humanists with an interest in the Roman history of Holland identified the Delf, erroneously as it turned out, with the Fossa Corbulonis, actually a much earlier waterway created by Roman troops around 47 A.D. parallel to the North Sea coastline in the vicinity of present-day Leiden. The cause of this confusion was a misreading of ancient topography by Philipp Clüver (Cluverius) (1580-1622), a Renaissance geographer born in Gdańsk. Clüver had worked for some time at the court of Polish king Sigismund III Vasa. Coming to Leiden to study law, Clüver instead dedicated his life to studying the topography of the ancient Roman Empire. Innovatively for that time, he combined historical knowledge of antiquity with observations gained during personal travels around Europe. Clüver's *Commentarius de tribus Rhēni* (Leiden: Louis Elsevier (I), Jan Bouwens, 1611), however, contained erroneous

¹⁷ Berends, Meischke, 'De bouwgeschiedenis van de Oude Kerk', p. 33.

¹⁸ Raue, 'Ontstaan en plattegrond van de stad Delft', p. 6.

¹⁹ Bult, Groen, 'Koningsveld', pp. 63-64.

information about the Delf.²⁰ During the early-modern period Clüver's mistake was repeated in general histories and encyclopedias, for instance Jacobus Kok's *Vaderlandsch woordenboek* (Amsterdam: Johannes Allart, 1788), where it was stated that the Roman origins of the Delf are 'a fact to which not even the slightest doubts exist' ('dat er geen de minste twijfeling daaromtrent over blijft').²¹

During the early-modern period Godfrey 'the Hunchback', who briefly ruled over Holland from 1071 to 1076, was widely understood to be the founder of Delft. An entry in the late-medieval Egmond Necrology credited Godfrey with the founding of a settlement or castle on the Delf (*Delf opidium*).²² Various humanist historians, including the Delft-born Michiel Vosmeer, built their narrative of the founding of the city on this information. Vosmeer's *Principes Hollandiae et Zelandiae, Domini Frisiae* (Christopher Plantin: Antwerp 1578) was a versified history of the counts of Holland illustrated by the renowned engraver Philips Galle. There, Godfrey called the founding of Delft one of the 'monuments' of his reign:

Gothiphraedus ego, Ultraiecti Praesulis arte,
Qui Batauum presi colla superba iugo.
Imperii monumenta mei sunt moenia Delphi,
Et quas ui colui non procul urbe, domos [...] ²³

This information was echoed in the 17th century by Marcus Zuerius Boxhorn in his *Chronyck van Hollandt, Zeelandt, ende Westvrieslandt* (Willem Riinenburgh: Leiden 1640):

Godevaert, Hertoch van Lothrijck mitter buyl, was Greve van Hollant mit crachte vijff jaer lack. [...] Dese Hertoch Godevaert stichtete die stede van

²⁰ In the Dutch translation: 'Nog is 'er een graft over, die van de stad Leiden met de naam van de *Vliet* naar Delft loopt en van daar tot het Dorp *Maaslant* vlietende by het naby gelegen Dorp *Sluis* in de Mas valt. Ik meine, dat dese de graft van Corbulo is'. This translation is taken from Cluverius, *Flud à Ghilde, Batavische Out-heden*, vol. i, p. 110.

²¹ Kok, *Vaderlandsch woordenboek*, vol. xi, p. 147.

²² Nieuwenhuijsen, 'De moord op Godfried met de bult', pp. 42-55; *Necrologium Egmundense* in: Oppermann (ed.), *Fontes Egmundenses*, pp. 105-110.

²³ Vosmeer, *Principes Hollandiae et Zelandiae*, pp. 24-25. A copy of Vosmeer's *Principes*, originally belonging to the book collection of Jacob von Rhediger, has been preserved in the University Library of Wrocław. See Kiedroń et al. (eds.), *Nederlandse oude drukken in Bohemen, Moravië en Silezië*, p. 223.

Delft. Ende hi dedere een schoen casteel bi maken, daer hi syn woenstat in hielt lange tydt.²⁴

Godfrey, Duke of Lotharingia, the Hunchback, was Count of Holland for a period of five years. [...] Duke Godfrey founded the city of Delft. And he built a fine castle there, where he lived for a long period of time.

Since no other documents other than the late-medieval *Necrologium Egmondense* have ever been brought to light, the tradition that Godfrey did actually establish a town or castle in Delft is no longer regarded as credible by historians.²⁵

During the medieval period the towns of Holland grew substantially but it was a proportional growth. By 1500 none of the Holland cities had yet developed into an unchallenged leader of the province. Amsterdam, a relative latecomer, obtaining town rights in 1300, grew to become the largest town in Holland with a population of approximately 27,000 souls in 1560. By comparison, the three remaining largest towns of that period, Delft, Leiden and Haarlem, all had a population of 14,000 inhabitants. This was much less than Antwerp, the largest town in the southern Netherlands, which had approximately 85,000 inhabitants.²⁶ In 1518 all six largest towns (Dordrecht, Haarlem, Delft, Leiden, Gouda and Amsterdam) carried 42% of the tax burden of Holland even though their population amounted to one fourth of the total for the entire province.²⁷

In July 1428 Jacoba of Bavaria signed an accord at Delft (*Zoen van Delft*). Through this document, Jacoba of Bavaria, a countess of the house of Wittelsbach who had long struggled to preserve her patrimony in Holland through a series of complicated marital alliances, reached a settlement with Philip the Good of Burgundy. The Delft accord was the first step to ending a century-long period of intense factional strife between the so-called 'Hooks' (*Hoeken*) and 'Codfish' (*Cabeljauwen*). Soon afterwards Holland passed definitely under the Burgundian ducal dynasty. As a result of the *Zoen van Delft* the towns of Holland obtained a permanent place in the newly-organized provincial States of Holland.²⁸

The Burgundian rulers of Holland introduced new institutions. In most towns the duke installed councils of eighty, forty or twenty-four of-

²⁴ Boxhorn, *Chronyck van Hollandt, Zeelandt, ende Westvrieslandt* (Willem Riinensburgh, Leiden, 1640), fol. 19. Cf. Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, pp. 48-49.

²⁵ Cf. Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 9.

²⁶ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, 114.

²⁷ Hoppenbrouwers, 'Van waterland tot stedenland', p. 148.

²⁸ Hoppenbrouwers, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

ficials.²⁹ In Delft a new ‘council of forty’ (*veertigraad*), seating the town’s wealthiest citizens, was called into being. The *veertigraad* was to form the core of a new ‘regent’ class of hereditary town oligarchs. It represented an expansion of the already-existing municipal administrative apparatus. The first burgomasters (*burgemeesters*), four in number, had been nominated to their post in Delft by William IV of Bavaria in 1409 in addition to the then already existing set of aldermen (*schepenen* – *scabini*) and a justice officer (*schout* – *scultetus*). In this respect, Delft was representative of the remaining Holland towns, where new administrative structures were added alongside existing ones in the 14th and 15th century. The late-medieval system of civic administration would survive in Delft with only minor changes until the fall of the Dutch Republic in 1795.³⁰

The changes introduced to consolidate the authority of the counts of Burgundy on the level of the individual provinces of the Low Countries were to prove equally lasting. In the first place among the new institutions, there was the office of ‘stadholder’ (*Stadhouder*), a provincial governor appointed by the dukes of Burgundy. One of the Burgundian stadholders of Holland and Zeeland (who were all, without exception, from the southern Netherlands), was Lodewijk van Gruuthuuse, an aristocratic bibliophile from Bruges, the owner of a celebrated manuscript of vernacular secular and religious songs. Besides the office of stadholder, there were the States General, an assembly of representatives from the Provincial States of the Burgundian Netherlands meeting in Brussels, and a central Chamber of Accounts (*Rekenkamer*). Finally, the aristocratic order of the Golden Fleece was designed to stimulate the allegiance of the Netherlandish nobility to the ducal house of Burgundy.

The late 14th and early-to-mid 15th century, notwithstanding periods of depression, can be generally characterized as a time of economic expansion for the Holland towns. Most large towns specialized in several staple trades. Delft, for example, specialized in butter production (in the 1300s dairy farming had replaced arable farming in the inadequately-drained polders), woolen cloth (*laken*), beer-brewing and inland shipping. As one anonymous author of a rhyme expressed it, Delft was

Een Stad, die stoft op ’t puyk van drank and wolle kleding;
Op tydelijk gemack; en rijcke Scheeps-uytreiding.³¹

²⁹ Blockmans and Prevenier, *De Bourgondiërs*, p. 146.

³⁰ Van Leeuwen, ‘Bestuurlijke en rechterlijke organisatie’, p. 26.

³¹ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, [vol. ii], p. 700.

*A town that boasts of the best in drink and woollen clothing,
Of worldly comforts and good provisions for shipping.*

The international trade in Holland during the entire medieval period was geared towards the importation of bulk products such as grain and timber from the Baltic Sea region (esp. Germany, Prussia, Poland and Lithuania), salt from France and Portugal, the export of beer, dairy (cheese) and cloth, the transportation of bulk freight and the herring fishery. Delft, which was positioned further inland, participated in the trade and fishery along the estuary of the Maas, competing with Dordrecht, the town that was traditionally the most important regional hub where all freight traffic converged. To facilitate outward trade, in 1389 Delft obtained the permission to establish a more convenient sea-going harbor – Delfshaven, in the delta of the Maas, several miles to the west of the small village of Rotterdam. Delfshaven became an important center for the fishery trade, another key sector of the town's economy.

1.2. THE RISE OF DELFT AS A CENTER OF CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS LITERATURE

It is deeply ingrained in Netherlandish culture that the Burgundian period was a time of exuberance, courtly splendor and sensuality.³² The Burgundian Netherlands are, indeed, not only synonymous with the 'waning of the Middle Ages', so suggestively described by J. Huizinga as a collective sensibility of excessive sterile formalism, artificial theatricality, decadence, and loss of vitality in the arts and social life.³³ The Burgundian period in Holland and elsewhere in the Netherlands actually heralded, in multiple ways, the emergence of a 'Golden Age' of literature, arts and culture, which was to last from the mid-16th century up until the Dutch Revolt, the civil and religious struggle that ended the period of Habsburg domination.

The 'Burgundian' 15th century witnessed the acceleration of a process in which an elite class of non-noble town-dwellers took on the role of 'cultural agents' in the most heavily urbanized, trade-oriented provinces of the

³² Blockmans, 'Bourgondisch en calvinistisch', pp. 113-119.

³³ Huizinga, *Herfsttij der middeleeuwen*. For a reaction to Huizinga's theses in the context of Holland see e.g. Van Oostrom, 'Van hoofs tot herfsttij', pp. 57-74.

Low Countries.³⁴ The Burgundian court, in close symbiosis with the metropolitan elites of the southern Netherlands, stimulated the rise of a sophisticated urban culture inspired by Christian and classical sources. The festivals organized at Bruges to celebrate Philip the Good's entrance into that city in 1440 anticipated the Biblical allegories of the Renaissance.³⁵ Elsewhere, as in Ghent (1548), complex classical themes prevailed.³⁶ At the same time the civic elites of the Low Countries stimulated the production of a vernacular literature in which the themes of profitable and moral conduct were emphasized and undesirable behavior was held up to ridicule.³⁷ Already at the end of the 14th century a preoccupation with moral renewal among the city-dwelling middle class and lower clergy provided the impetus for the introspective Modern Devotion (beginning in the years c. 1370-1380),³⁸ whose leading exponent was the blessed Thomas à Kempis, author of *De imitatione Christi*. Not without reason, therefore, the fifteenth century brought a flourishing of the arts and letters, but it was also, as other historians put it, a 'time of ambivalence',³⁹ tension, uncertainty and crisis.

Even though the main cultural impulses issued from the southern Netherlands, and notwithstanding the fact that the northern and southern Netherlands before 1425 had belonged to separate 'political theatres',⁴⁰ this 'Burgundian' cultural impulse would have failed in the north had it not encountered there a flourishing, highly-developed urbanized culture that was able to assimilate and play upon these new tendencies.⁴¹ This is especially true of the region around The Hague. The court of count Albrecht of Bavaria at The Hague was the scene of a literary and artistic revival around the year 1400. Albrecht was Holland's most celebrated late-medieval *maecenas* of the arts and letters. Among the poets and writers

³⁴ Blockmans, 'Burghers as cultural agents', pp. 407-421.

³⁵ Kipling, *Enter the King*, pp. 48-60.

³⁶ Smith, 'Venit nobis pacificus Dominus', pp. 258-290.

³⁷ Pleij, 'Inleiding: Op belofte van profijt', pp. 8-51; Pleij, 'The rise of urban literature', pp. 62-77.

³⁸ There exists an extensive corpus of research on the Modern Devotion. A standard reference is still Post, *Modern Devotion*, (for the internalized spirituality of the Devout see esp. pp. 197-243). For more recent research on this extensive subject see Weiler, 'Recent historiography on the modern devotion', pp. 161-175. For the Modern Devout as writers and readers of religious texts see e.g. Mertens, 'The Modern Devotion and Innovation in Middle Dutch Literature', pp. 226-241.

³⁹ Blockmans and Prevenier, *De Bourgondiërs*, pp. 51-93.

⁴⁰ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, p. 21.

⁴¹ Blockmans and Prevenier, *De Bourgondiërs*, p. 10.

at his court were Willem van Hillegaersberch – a versatile performer of oral narratives, the Herald of Bavaria (*Heraut van Beieren*) – a chronicler of chivalric tournaments, and the diplomat Dirck Potter who introduced Holland to Ovid's *Heroides*, *Ars amatoria* and *Remedia amoris* in his *Der minnen loep*.⁴² Other artists included the musicians Martinus Fabri and Hughe Boy. An accomplished collection of secular lyrics called the *Haags liederenhandschrift* gives an impression of the songs that were sung for entertainment in the bi-cultural Netherlands-German atmosphere of The Hague.⁴³ Last but not least, there was Albrecht's court chaplain, Dirc van Delft, a Delft-born Dominican educated in Germany. Dirc van Delft's *Tafel vanden kersten ghelove*, a theological encyclopedia in the scholastic tradition, is widely regarded as the most learned work of its kind written in the medieval Netherlands.⁴⁴

This vibrant cultural climate imparted itself to lesser centers within the province of Holland. In Delft, however, it was not a secular court but its two churches which formed the main axis of cultural activity. During the 14th century Delft grew into a significant local center of pilgrimage, attracting mainly pilgrims from the south-western part of the *graafschap* Holland.⁴⁵ In 1327 one Machteld, a blind woman from The Hague, was healed before the miraculous image of the Virgin Mary of Jesse (*Maria [van] Jesse*).⁴⁶ To commemorate this miracle a yearly procession, the *Om-meganck*, was held each year in Delft on St. Odolphus's day (June 12), the traditional annual market day. This and the next miracles were recorded in a specially-made chronicle of the Old Church.⁴⁷ The oldest religious

⁴² Van Oostrom, 'De oude orde in verval?', pp. 202-210; for Dirck Potter, see Van Oostrom, *Het woord van eer*, pp. 225-268.

⁴³ *Haags liederenhandschrift*, The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 128 E 2. Van Oostrom, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-135.

⁴⁴ Van Oostrom et al., 'Dirc van Delft en zijn lezers', p. 53.

⁴⁵ Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 39.

⁴⁶ The figure of the Virgin Mary became known as *Maria Jesse* in the 16th century (Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 40). However, a 'guild of the tree of Jesse' dedicated to maintaining the cult of the Virgin Mary, existed approximately since the 15th century (Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, pp. 240-241). A parallel for the Delft cult of *Maria Jesse* in the Netherlands might be the worship of the Virgin Mary as *Virga Jesse* in Hasselt (for the history of this image, see e.g. Allard, *Onze lieve vrouw van Hasselt*). Unlike in Delft the original 14th century figure of *Virga Jesse* from Hasselt survived the iconoclastic riots of 1566 and exists to this day. The Delft figure was replaced in 1939 by a similar late-Gothic figure which is now at the Roman Catholic Church of Maria van Jesse (see Van Peer, *Maria van Jesse*).

⁴⁷ R.A.U. Archief O.B.C. inv. nr 453; For a modern edition see Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, pp. 197-224.

community in Delft itself, the beguinage (*Bagijnhof*), was established in the mid-13th century.⁴⁸ It was the center of miracles connected with the person of Geertruyd van Oosten (d. 1358), a beguine mystic venerated as a saint who received the stigmata at Delft in 1340.⁴⁹ Apart from the previously-mentioned figure of *Maria Jesse*, other sacred objects included the so-called Holy Cross ‘*mitten hair*’, which is believed to have been a life-size Crucifix. Its name is most likely to have been derived from the artist’s use of realistic-looking human hair on Christ’s head. Miracles related to this figure were recorded as taking place since 1412.⁵⁰ These cults had a local or regional impact, similar to the local religious confraternities and devotional guilds that existed in the Old and New Church.⁵¹ The later cult of the Virgin Mary of the Seven Sorrows (1503), by comparison, thrived under the protection of a single confraternity which established itself in a number of towns throughout the Netherlands.

The literary culture of Delft in the period between 1400 and 1500 is infused by the events of the Christian liturgical calendar, by the local religious celebrations associated with the worship of the Virgin Mary, and by the commemoration of the miracles. The records of the Old Church (St. Hippolyte) for the year 1400 mention a play, *spul van Yesse*, staged in conjunction with the *Ommeganck*, the yearly procession in honor of *Maria Jesse*.⁵² Other processions, including the one on the feast of Corpus Christi, were also enlivened by dramatic elements.⁵³ Around 1496 an Easter play in Latin was staged in the Old Church. It has been incompletely preserved with only one text-roll (*ceel*) surviving to this day.⁵⁴ The interior of the New Church, too, provided a space for staging religious dramatic performances. In the winter of 1498 churchgoers could witness a play about the Three Kings (*spul van den 3 Coningen*). The three kings were played by priests who, rather spectacularly, rode into the church on horseback.⁵⁵

Other sparsely documented literary manifestations at the New Church were the products of a new guild dedicated to ‘the sweet name of Jesus’

⁴⁸ Verhoeven, *op. cit.*, p. 19. Koorn, *Begijnhoven*, pp. 6-7.

⁴⁹ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 5v.

⁵⁰ Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 42.

⁵¹ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, pp. 288-296.

⁵² Oosterbaan, *op. cit.*, p. 246.

⁵³ Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *De Delftse rederijders*, p. 13.

⁵⁴ Oosterbaan, ‘Het Delftse paasspel van omstreeks 1497’, pp. 1-26; B.A. Haarlem inv. nr. 578.

⁵⁵ Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *De Delftse rederijders*, pp. 19-20.

(*Gilde des zueten naems Jhesus*) dating from 1487.⁵⁶ The 'sweet name of Jesus' had been chosen by Philip the Fair as the patron of the Sovereign Chamber of the Netherlands.⁵⁷ This guild offered the urban elites an environment for religious devotion and sociability. In Delft the guild of the 'sweet name of Jesus' had some relations with the Franciscan order at Delft and the guild of the crossbowmen, both of which were involved in preparing literary (theatrical) activities held during religious celebrations; it was the first brotherhood whose members were explicitly referred to as rhetoricians ('die ghesellen van den rhetorijcke').⁵⁸ This Guild persisted until at least the 1530s, when it evolved into the chamber of rhetoric 'De Rapenbloem' (see below, **Chapter 5**). Preserved is a woodcut which showed the Child Jesus standing on a globe surrounded by angels; underneath was the inscription 'Van die crachtighe, machtighe Jhesus naem // Is in de nieuwerck te delf een broederschap bequaem'. The woodcut, dating from c. 1530, was issued to guild members who had paid for a meal to be held after their funeral by the other members of the guild.⁵⁹

By far the most visible manifestation of the rising economic and cultural status of Delft during the 15th century was its architecture and the growing number of ecclesiastic institutions. If the beguine mystic Geertruyd van Oosten found herself, in an earlier age, in a town that only had a single church, the Old Church (St. Hippolyte) and one chapel in the hospice (*Gasthuis*), then the following century saw the completion of a magnificent second church consecrated to St. Ursula. Its construction began after a miraculous apparition in 1351 convinced a group of pious Delft citizens of the necessity of erecting a new church. The church of St. Ursula was continuously under construction from 1383. Its monumental spire, overlooking the *Markt*, was finished in 1496, a century after the first stone had been laid.⁶⁰ This New Church, as it came to be called, was a site of pilgrimage to the figure of Our Lady of Sorrows (*ter nood Gods*), a *Pieta*, and of Passion-oriented devotion. The miracles leading to the building of the New Church and connected with the worship of Our Lady of Sorrows were recorded in a manuscript completed around 1439.⁶¹ Meanwhile the Old Church additionally underwent renovation and en-

⁵⁶ Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22; A different date, 1493, is cited by Dixhoorn, *Lustige geesten*, p. 102.

⁵⁷ Dixhoorn, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

⁵⁸ Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *De Delftse rederijders*, pp. 21-26.

⁵⁹ Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

⁶⁰ Berends, 'De bouwgeschiedenis van de Nieuwe Kerk', pp. 38-40.

⁶¹ R.A.U. Archief O.B.C. inv. nr 453.

largement from 1390, with periods of intense building activity taking place between 1425-1440 and around 1450.⁶²

The 'Burgundian century' (c. 1400 - c. 1500) saw a profound rise in the number of cloisters whose population of monks and nuns increased significantly during this period. Apart from the earliest beguinage, dating from c. 1250, most monasteries located within the city walls were constructed either soon before or during the 1400s. The largest convents in Delft were the nunneries of St. Agatha (c. 1400), now known as the Prinsenhof,⁶³ and St. Barbara (1418),⁶⁴ both of the Third Order of St. Francis and located in the Oude Delft.

The number of religious living in monastic communities in Delft has been estimated at several hundred.⁶⁵ Their presence made for the existence of an extensive network of consumers of religious literature. In 1516, St. Agatha's nunnery alone was populated by 110 nuns, the daughters of wealthy Holland families.⁶⁶ Smaller convents were St. Clara's (1415) of the Clarisian Order, St. Agnes's (before 1420), St. Anna's (1441) of the Augustinian chapter of Windesheim, St. Mary Magdalen's (before 1450), and St. Ursula's of the Third order of St. Francis (before 1454). Male monasteries included those of the Franciscans (*Minderbroeders Observanten*), who arrived at Delft in 1449,⁶⁷ and of the Carthusians (1469).⁶⁸ Most of these monasteries, both male and female, had their own chapels and many had scriptoria.

Existing since the 1370s in Overijssel, and from there disseminating its ideas to other provinces, including Holland, the Modern Devotion was an orthodox Catholic movement whose leaders, especially the most influential of all, the Bl. Thomas à Kempis, sought to renew the inner spiritual life of the Christian individual. This focus on the inward religious experience and introspective examination of one's conscience, cultivated in the schools and chapter houses of the Brothers of the Common Life, looked forward to the late 15th century and the Christian humanism of Erasmus and Rudolph Agricola.⁶⁹

⁶² Berends, Meischke, 'De bouwgeschiedenis van de Oude Kerk', pp. 32-37.

⁶³ Kruimink, Schuur, 'Het St. Agathaklooster', pp. 40-51.

⁶⁴ Freling, 'Het St. Barbaraklooster', pp. 51-53.

⁶⁵ Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 19.

⁶⁶ Kruimink, Schuur, 'Het St. Agathaklooster', pp. 42.

⁶⁷ Brouwer, 'Verdwenen kloosters uit de Delftse binnenstad', pp. 54-59.

⁶⁸ Gumbert, 'De kartuizers en hun Delftse klooster', pp. 10-36.

⁶⁹ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 42.

The Modern Devotion found a large following in Holland. One of its leaders, Geert Groote delivered a sermon at the Old (St. Hippolyte's) Church at Delft around 1380.⁷⁰ His movement was represented in Delft by a chapter house called 'the valley of St. Hieronymus' (*St. Hieronymusdal*) and founded by the Brothers of the Common Life from Deventer (c. 1403) who adopted the rule of St. Augustine (*fraterheren*). Located just outside Delft was the monastery of 'the Virgin Mary on Mount Zion' (abbreviated to *Sion*). This offshoot of the monastery of St. Hieronymus was founded in 1435.⁷¹ A book of hours composed by Geert Groote was written and illuminated in Delft.⁷²

The scriptoria of Delft convents of St. Agnes, St. Barbara, St. Anna or St. Ursula were important regional centers of book-illuminating and manuscript production.⁷³ Some of the surviving manuscripts, such as Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek ms. 21696, have been explicitly identified by information referring to specific convents, here the Delft convent of St. Agnes (*het dal van Josaphat*): 'iste liber scriptus et illuminatus est in monasterio Vallis Josaphat'.⁷⁴ Other manuscripts have been identified, by reason of a prominent mention of specific female saints (St. Barbara and St. Anna), as originating from the Delft convents that had these saints

⁷⁰ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 232.

⁷¹ Moerman, 'Het klooster Sion', pp. 64-67; Vermaseren, Buschkens-Dijkgraaf, *Het klooster 'Sancta Maria in Monte Sion'*.

⁷² The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 133 E 19.

⁷³ A useful general resource for manuscripts with a Delft provenance is Venner, Chavannes-Mazel, 'Delftse handschriften en boekverluchting', pp. 134-138; for a survey of sixteenth-century Dutch ateliers where illuminated manuscripts were produced see Van Meurs, 'Noordnederlandse handschriften in de 16^e eeuw', pp. 28-38. For the scriptorium at the Delft convent of St. Ursula see Rudy, 'De productie van manuscripten in het Sint-Ursulaklooster', pp. 24-27. On the so-called 'Delft grisailles' see Karłowska-Kamzowa, 'Geneza i funkcje ideowe miniatur', pp. 95-104, where a prayer-book executed in the grisaille technique (Warsaw, Biblioteka Narodowa Rps I 3779) was assigned a Delft provenance owing to its similarity to a prayer-book from the scriptorium of St. Agnes' convent in Delft (Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek ms. 21696). On the other hand, some of the so-called 'Delft grisailles' (in large format), which cannot be explicitly attributed to Delft, are now more commonly believed to have been manufactured in the scriptorium of the monastery of Lopsen near Leiden (Obbema, 'Het Leids getijdenboek in een nieuw perspectief', pp. 176-192; cf. Brinkman, *Dichten uit liefde*, p. 99).

⁷⁴ Abbreviations in Latin and Middle Dutch texts (here and below) are cursive. The manuscripts produced at the convent of St. Agnes include: Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek ms. 21696; Dublin, Trinity College ms. K.2.32 and Cracow, Muzeum Czartoryskich ms 2946 (Venner, Chavannes-Mazel, 'Delftse handschriften', pp. 134-138). The inscription inside the Brussels manuscript is quoted after Gaspar, Lyna, *Les principaux manuscrits*, vol. i, p. 116.

for their patrons. Some manuscripts can be identified by their characteristic red and blue penwork as originating from Delft (e.g. Cracow Museum Czartoryskich ms. 2946, completed by the copyist in 1463).⁷⁵

Concurrently with their activities in the sphere of book production the inhabitants of the convents also comprised an important group of readers of vernacular Catholic literature. In 1857 the antiquarian W. Moll published the inventory of the library (*boekerij*) of St. Barbara's convent.⁷⁶ This inventory, containing 109 items, some of which Moll was able to identify, provides an interesting insight into the reading of theological and devotional literature by the nuns of that convent during the second half of the 15th century.⁷⁷ The books in the possession of the convent were '*studierboecken*' that served the nuns in their individual or collective religious contemplation, prayer and study. The inventory was drawn up by a female *custos librorum* (*bewaerster der boeken*), a nun specialized in managing the library. It contained both hand-written and (towards the end of the list) printed publications.⁷⁸ The books that could be consulted in the library were overwhelmingly theological and devotional ones, and the list is therefore an excellent snapshot of the Catholic religious literature that circulated in Delft before the Reformation.

Among the books at the convent of St. Barbara were editions of the Old and New Testament. These were annotated vernacular paraphrases of selections out of the Bible, for instance the Pentateuch, *Den bibel besloten van die vijf boecken Moyses* [104], the Song of Solomon, *ij capittelen uut der minnen boec* [4], or a paraphrase of the Psalms with glosses by Ludolf von Sachsen, *ij sticken van die quinquagena, dat sijn die gloses van die souter* [11] (the numbers in square brackets refer to the position on the list in Moll's edition). A paraphrase of the New Testament with readings ordered according to the liturgical year was available to the nuns as *Die ewangelien mitten epistelen* [1] ('the Gospels and the Epistles'), while the Gospel of St. John could be studied in a separate paraphrase with

⁷⁵ Manuscripts identified through calendars or the inclusion of special prayers include The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 135 G 9 and Nijmegen, Universiteitsbibliotheek Hs. 295 (the name of St. Barbara is emphasized); The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 131 H 3 (St. Anna). Venner, Chavannes-Mazel, 'Delftse handschriften', pp. 134-135.

⁷⁶ *Dit sijn die studier boeken die in die liberie horen. Int convent van sinte barbaren binnen delft besloten in hollant*, The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 130 E 24.

⁷⁷ Moll, *De boekerij van het St. Barbara-klooster te Delft*. For a recent analysis of this Delft catalogue see also Stooker, Verbeij, *Collecties op orde*, vol. 1, esp. pp. 268-288 and pp. 295-297, vol. 2, no. 288.

⁷⁸ The title and consecutive number of each book is quoted from the inventory of St. Barbara's convent after Moll, *De boekerij van het St. Barbara-klooster te Delft*.

commentary (which additionally contained three chapters of the Song of Solomon), *St. Jans ewangeli mit die expositie ende iij capittelen uut der minnen boec* [4]. Such paraphrases of the Old and New Testament were widely read both by the inhabitants of religious communities and by the laity on Sundays and religious feast-days.⁷⁹

Among the books at St. Barbara's convent were perennial religious favorites which emerge as a thread throughout the Delft reading and book-producing world during the late Middle Ages. Among these favorites were lives of Christ whose sources can be found in popular Latin texts such as Ludolf von Sachsen's widely-read *Vita Christi* or St. Bonaventura's *Meditationes vitae Christi*. Alongside these books were devotional narratives specifically describing the Passion, such as *Die passie, die die vier ewangelisten bescreven heeft* [74] or the mysteriously-titled 'black passion', *Die swarte passie* [73], probably called so after the color of its binding or of its miniatures. During the late Middle Ages a popular commentary on the Passion of Christ together with moral conclusions for the faithful were Jordanus von Quedlinburg's *LXV articuli passionis*; these were available in the convent as *iij boeken van die lxxv articulen* [28]. Next, there were collections of narratives relating Marian miracles or treatises which blended catechesis (instruction in confession, the ten commandments, faith, the cardinal sins) with a moralizing impulse. Books of sermons, for instance by St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *Sinte Barnaerts sermoenen van den advent* [36], brought about the transfer of theological ideas into the monastery. The collection also included sermons whose authorship remains unknown, such as *Een cort sermoenboec alt iaer doer, in sloten gebonden* [105]. An exhortation to a better Christian life was the theme of a number of texts attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux: the 'thoughts', *iij boeken van Sinte Bairnaerts gedachten* [23], and 'the book of the lily', *Dat boec van der lelye, dat Sinte Barnaert beschrijft* [44], along with St. Bonaventura's *Stimulus divini amoris* and Henry Suso's *Von der ewiger Weisheit* (*Horologium aeternae sapientiae*). The Delft library offered books by the Flemish mystic Bl. Jan van Ruusbroec: *Dat boek [van] Johan Ruusbroec van den xij duochden* [64]; *Ruusbroec van der gheesteliker bruloft* [66]; *Moeyses tabernakelen* [89], as well as a biography of Ruusbroec by Jan van Leeuwen, the cook of the monastery of Groenendaal near Brussels. Another item on the shelves and tables of the

⁷⁹ A copy of the *Epistelen en evangelien* printed by Gerard Leeu at Gouda (24 May 1477) has been preserved at the University Library, Utrecht. See no. 178 'Epistelen en Evangelien' in: Van der Horst et al. (ed.), *Handschriften en Oude Drukken van de Utrechtse Universiteitsbibliotheek*, pp. 330-331.

library were the letters of Geert Groote, *Van meester Gherijt de Groot epistelen*. These books illustrate the continuing reception of ideas emerging from the circles of Netherlandish mysticism and Modern Devotion in the monastic communities of Holland.

For their reading in the lives of the saints the nuns at St. Barbara's had at their disposal a two-volume copy of Jacobus de Voragine's *Aurea legenda* in its vernacular translation: *ij boeken van dat passionael, dat winterstic ende dat somerstic* [13]. This widely-copied and (after c. 1475) frequently re-printed Netherlandish version of the *Aurea legenda*, the *Passionael*, was completed in the mid-14th century by Petrus Naghel, a Carthusian from Herne near Brussels.⁸⁰ Additionally, the lives of the Apostles and early saints of the Church could be studied in two further volumes, an *actibus mit sommige ander heiligen legenden* [52] and *Thobias boec mit sommige ander heiligen legenden* [53]. The convent had a sizable collection of saints' lives in separate volumes beginning with its patron, St. Barbara, *ij boeken van Sinte Barbaren leven ende sterven* [18]. Interestingly, the proportion of the *vitae* of male to female saints was almost equal. Male saints were represented by St. Francis and his twelve followers, *een boec van Sinte Franciscus leven* [31] and *een boec van sijn xij broederen* [32], St. Jerome, *St. Iheronimus leven ende sterven* [54], St. Anthony, *St. Anthonijs boec* [56], Saints Epictetus and Astion, *St. Epictetus ende Astions boec* [61], and St. Justinian, *van Sinte Ioest* [83]. The featured female saints were St. Agnes with sermons, *Sinte Agnieten historie ende miraculen mit ij sermoenen* [37], St. Ursula – the patron of the New Church – in *St. Ursulen boec* [55], St. Elizabeth, *St. Lijsbeth boec* [58], St. Clara, *St. Claren boec* [59], St. Catherine of Siena, *St. Katharina de Senis boec* [60]. One of the hagiographic narratives with a local character in the possession of the monastery was a '*salige Lyedwien boec*' [103] pertaining to the life of the Bl. (later St.) Lidwina of Schiedam. Hagiographies (numbers [54-56] and [58-61]) were placed together on the list, probably because the librarian deliberately tried to impose some order on these books. Other books were probably placed together because they belonged to a collection of literature that might have been donated to the library at a particular moment in time. Such donations by the laity were not uncommon. Books were bequeathed in wills; also, frequently, the books that a novice received as a gift from his or her

⁸⁰ For the identification of Petrus Naghel as the translator of the *Passionael* in the circles of the Carthusians at Herne as well as the theory that Naghel was the 'Bible translator of 1360', cf. Berteloot, Hlatky, 'Die südniederländische Legenda aurea', pp. 35-52.

parents on the occasion of saying the vows were eventually deposited in the library of the convent.

The list maintained by the librarian (*bewaerster*) at St. Barbara's illustrates the close linkage that existed between various types of religious texts (for instance Biblical translations, theological treatises, works on catechesis and moral instruction) in the common setting of the convent. These books allow us to close the gap that often exists between circles of the audience (religious readers in convents and lay readers who had access to this type of literature) and their producers (writers, translators, copyists and printers). Monastic *scriptoria* as well as libraries such as the one at St. Agnes's convent and other lesser known ones, acted as a point of transfer between the macrocosm of *Latinitas* and the microcosm of Dutch vernacular literature and devotion practiced by town-dwellers. It is not surprising, therefore, that a high degree of continuity can be detected in the choices of readers and producers of Catholic literature within the civic community of Delft between 1400 and 1500 or even later.

The churches and convents at Delft and in the region provided a large consistent group of readers for copyists and printers. During times of economic growth, as during the 15th century when Delft became an esteemed regional center of pilgrimage, parish priests and the inhabitants of convents and monasteries possessed an adequate income required to pay for the production of books. In no small measure this stimulated the dynamic early expansion of the Delft printing industry from 1477 onwards. The circles of lay and religious readers and listeners of literature were by no means separate from one another. The taste for certain types of religious literature among the priests of the churches and in the convents consequently influenced the choices of secular Catholic readers who, through personal relations, were in the orbit of these institutions. This further increased the potential market for religious books in the vernacular. The selection of literature can be seen as a response to certain kinds of religious experience; simultaneously, the same literature shaped the religious consciousness and identity of its readers. The literature of the library at St. Barbara's therefore presents a cross-section of the religious consciousness of the dwellers of the convent and of other lay and religious readers in Delft who had access to these and similar books.

Apart from the cloisters the other important group of institutions which made an enormous impact on the religious and social landscape of Delft during the later Middle Ages were the almshouses, the old men's/ women's homes and hospitals established under the Bavarian counts of

Holland and during the Burgundian period. As the city expanded the number of charitable institutions began to rise correspondingly. Adding to the care already provided by the monasteries a 'St. George's hospital' (*Sinte Joris gasthuus*) was founded around the year 1407.⁸¹ An old men's home, with a chapel consecrated to the Virgin Mary and St. Christopher, arose in 1411 at the Voldersgracht, and an old women's home was established in roughly the same period. The 'house of the Holy Spirit' (*Heilige Geesthuis*), a non-monastic community for solitary pious women from the burgher class was established around 1396 by the Delft *schepen* Willem Nagel.⁸² It is interesting to note that the 14th century chapel of the *Heilige Geesthuis* (now called the St. Hippolytuskapel) is the only place in Delft where Catholic religious services are being held today in exactly the same place where they had been celebrated before the Reformation.

The organization of the church in the Netherlands during the later Middle Ages relied on a complex system of prebends and benefices. From a pastoral point of view this system tended to lead to an unfavorable weakening of ties between the faithful and those among the clergy who were less frequently present in their parishes. The benefice system, however, although imperfect, brought about the formation of supra-regional personal networks connecting churches in the various provinces of the Low Countries. During the late 15th century the curacy of Delft's Old Church (St. Hippolyte's) belonged to three south Netherlanders who had obtained, consecutively, the same prebend at the Brugian chapter of St. Donatius. These were Egidius Joye (d. 1483), curate at Delft since c. 1465 and *cantor capellanus* at the court of Philip of Burgundy; Joannes Losschaert (at Delft c. 1484/5 - c. 1494/5); and Anthonius Mettenye (1494/5-before 1522). These latter two priests came from Bruges, where they resided for most of the time even after becoming curates of the Old Church (St. Hippolyte's).⁸³

The Church, which seemingly enjoyed vast privileges during the 14th century, was nevertheless under strong pressure to conform to the demands of the secular authorities. The illegitimate son of Duke Philip, David of Burgundy was nominated bishop of Utrecht in 1456, against the wishes of the local chapter.⁸⁴ This obvious enmeshing of secular and religious authority suggested that religious faith was being increasingly subordinated to the political objectives of the rulers of the Low Countries.

⁸¹ Annema, 'Ziekenhuizen, bouwkundige aspecten', p. 70.

⁸² Eekhout, Annema, 'Het Heilige Geestzusterhuis', pp. 67-69.

⁸³ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, pp. 132-133, 135-136.

⁸⁴ Blockmans, Prevenier, *De Bourgondiërs*, p. 135.

The house of Burgundy, perhaps more than any other at that time in Europe, resorted to the medium of art and public performance to present themselves as Christian sovereigns. The same manifestations, conversely, can be read as evidence of a strong tendency on the part of civic and administrative elites to ally the sovereign to Christian moral concerns. The most important among these performances was the 'joyous entrance' (*Blijde Inkomst*). Christian devotions, themes and narratives, propagated by the city elites during official events, sent a subtle message that could be used to secure the town's rights against a potentially predatory government. In this way a symbolic dialogue, expressed in the language of allegorical processions and festivities, developed between the sovereign and the elite class of subjects in the Netherlands.⁸⁵

The ability of the towns to protect their rights was always important in the medieval Low Countries, but it took on a significant measure of urgency under Duke Charles the Bold (1467-1477), who advanced an unpopular policy of centralization, military conquest and taxation. In 1474, taxation imposed by Charles the Bold on monasteries in Holland sparked a storm of outrage. Protests by the Holland clergy culminated in a tense stand-off between the officers of justice who had been sent in to take possession of monastic property and the mother superior of the convent of St. Agatha at Delft.⁸⁶

Towards the end of Charles' reign the Low Countries were once again plunged in turmoil owing to opposition from the largest cities, especially in the southern Netherlands, to fiscal pressure as well as to the expanding ducal bureaucracy that had been the hallmark of the Burgundian state. Unexpectedly, however, Charles the Bold died while waging war on the Swiss in 1477. Amid the chaos that ensued the States General conditionally acknowledged his daughter Mary of Burgundy as heir to the throne. Under pressure from the States Mary of Burgundy signed the Great Privilege (1477), a document that can be reasonably called the first constitution for the entire area of the Netherlands.⁸⁷ In the Great Privilege Mary conceded a number of rights to the States. The main points of the document ensured the States the right to assemble on their own initiative, an equal representation of all provinces in all central admin-

⁸⁵ Kipling, *Enter the King*, pp. 6-47; For examples of the role of processional culture in strengthening the symbolic ties between the court and cities see also Blockmans, Donckers, 'Self-Representation of Court and City in Flanders and Brabant in the Fifteenth and Early Sixteenth Centuries', pp. 81-111.

⁸⁶ [Aurelius], *Die cronycke van Hollant*, fol. 217v-218v.

⁸⁷ Blockmans, 'The Formation of a Political Union', p. 114.

istrative bodies and judicial tribunals, guaranteed the sovereign's respect for all prior 'privileges' and customs, and placed restrictions on the sovereign's ability to unilaterally impose taxation or declare war.⁸⁸ A few days after the general Privilege, an individual act of the same kind was signed with the delegates of the province of Holland.⁸⁹ Even though the Great Privilege was eventually annulled by the States (1493),⁹⁰ its legacy in terms of thinking about statehood proved a long-lived one. In the years of the Dutch Revolt the Great Privilege constituted, in the minds of many contemporaries, a significant landmark on the road towards a federative union of 'sovereign' provinces.

1.3. PRINTERS AND THE GROWTH OF CATHOLIC READERSHIP IN DELFT

On 10 January 1477, only a few days after Charles the Bold had died (unbeknownst to the inhabitants of Holland) on the battlefield at Nancy, the first printed Bible in the Netherlands appeared in Delft. The 'Delft Bible' (*Delftse Bijbel* or *Bible in Duytsche*) was a literal vernacular translation of the Old Testament (without the Psalms), the first of its kind to appear in the Netherlands. This pioneering edition in two volumes was the result of the partnership of Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer, who came from a Delft regent family, and Mauricius Yemantszoon van Middelborch, a Zeelander. The colophon announced the new publication:

Deese jeghenwoerdighe bible mit horen boecken ende elck boeck mit alle sijne capitelen, bi enen notabelen meester wel overgheset wt den Latine in Duytsche ende wel naerstelic gecorrigeert ende wel ghespelt, was gemaect te Delf in Hollant mitter hulpe Gods ende bij ons Jacob Jacobs soen ende Mauricius Yemants zoen van Middelborch tot eeren Gods ende tot stichticheit ende lerijnghe der kersten ghelovighen menschen ende wort voleynd int jaer der incarnacien ons Heren duystent vier hondert zeven ende tseventich den thienden dach der maent Januario.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Blok, *Geschiedenis van het Nederlandsche volk*, vol. i, pp. 466-467; Blockmans, Prevenier, *De Bourgondiërs*, pp. 218-219.

⁸⁹ [Aurelius], *Die cronycke van Hollant*, fol. 221r.

⁹⁰ Blockmans and Van Herwaarden, 'De Nederlanden van 1493 tot 1555', p. 443.

⁹¹ Delft Bible (Delftse bijbel), The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 E 55-56, vol. ii, colophon.

The Bible presented here, with all its books and each book with all its chapters, has been correctly translated by a renowned scholar from the Latin into the Dutch, and assiduously corrected and properly spelled, has been produced with the help of God in Delft, in Holland, by us, Jacob Jacobszoon and Mauricius Yemantszoen van Middelborch, in praise of God as well as for the spiritual benefit and instruction of the Christian faithful, and it was completed in the year of the incarnation of our Lord 1477 on the tenth day of January.

The decision of the two printers to start their publishing venture in Delft with such a costly and prestigious publication implied the existence of a group of wealthy sponsors and purchasers. It also implied that the printers had access to a scholarly network capable of producing a competent translation. The translation, the work of an unnamed academically-trained professional (*notabele meester*), was the effect of collating the Vulgate text with several already existing (revised) vernacular translations of the Old Testament. The origins of Dutch medieval vernacular Bible translations lead to the southern Netherlands. The source for early translations was the *Historia Scholastica* of Petrus Comestor (d. 1179), a versified Latin summary of the Biblical narratives. A vernacular text of this kind, modeled on the *Historia Scholastica*, which additionally contained non-Biblical stories on subjects such as the life of Alexander the Great or the destruction of Jerusalem was Jacob van Maerlant's versified 'History Bible', the *Rijmbijbel*. Meanwhile, a 'harmonized' translation of the New Testament, conveying the Gospels in a single text, appeared between 1280 and 1300 in Flanders or Brabant. In the second half of the 14th century, around 1360-61, a vernacular prose translation modeled on Comestor's *Historia*, containing most of the Old Testament as well as the harmonized Gospel books and the Acts of the Apostles, was completed at the request of the Brussels patrician Jan Taye. The translator of this so-called 'South-Netherlandish History Bible' (*Zuid-Nederlandse Historiebijbel*) was Petrus Naghel, a Flemish Carthusian from the monastery at Herne.

Bible translations were produced, in the case of Van Maerlant and Naghel explicitly so, for the instruction and pious meditation of educated lay readers who came mainly from the urban patriciate. The Prologue (*Prologus*) to the Delft translation was a near-literal copy of the introduction to the History Bible of 1360-61. The authors provided the following arguments to justify the studying of the Scripture:

Want het is der zielen salicheit datmen die heilighe scriftuere gaerne leest: ende hoert leesen. Want alsoe die mensche niet alleen en leeft biden naetuerlijken broede: mer oeck vanden woerden die gaen wt den monde goods. Daer om selmen gaerne leesen ende horen leesen: ende prediken die hey-

lighe schrift: op dat die ziel ghesont mach werden: ende ghestarct tot allen doechden. Veel luyden sijn die lesen waerlike boeken van konsten: ende van krachten: historien: ende van ouden heren die der werelt dyenden. Mer dat is al tijtverlyes: want sij daer inne niet en vinden der zielen salicheit: want alle die tijt die wij onnutteliken toe brenghen daer moeten wij voer gode rekeninghe of gheuen.⁹²

Because reading (and listening when others are reading) the Holy Scripture is beneficial to the salvation of souls. Because man does not live by natural bread alone, but also by the words that come from the mouth of God. This is why one should gladly read and listen to others reading, and [one should] preach the Holy Scripture: for by these means the soul will be healed and fortified in virtue. Many people read books about the arts and dominions, histories, and [books] about the ancient kings who served the world. But all this is but a waste of time, because in them they [=the readers] will not find anything leading to the salvation of souls, since we must give a good account for all time that we spend without any real benefit.

Reading the scripture (by which the authors of the 'Prologus' understood collective reading) was a spiritually beneficial activity that energized the Christian individual on his or her path to salvation. Biblical study was expressed in terms of a useful activity. Spiritually-enriching literature was vastly more profitable than serious but worldly reading-matter, such as the 'histories' of kings, knights and heroes (one might recall here the hugely popular ones about Alexander the Great, of which one version, *Die historie, dat leven ende dat regiment des coninc alexanders*, was published by Van der Meer and Yemantszoen two years later in 1479). 'Histories' (as well as texts in the *artes* and natural science) were considered informative, so doubtless worth reading in their own right, but since they were of little or no consequence in the Christian eschatological perspective where the final goal was the salvation of the soul, they could only be viewed by Christians as a 'waste of time'. This rhetorical strategy of contrasting the useful (profitable) with the useless (unprofitable) would have been familiar to town-dwelling elites from the writings of the Dutch instructive moralists, especially Jan van Boendale and Jacob van Maerlant.⁹³

The Modern Devotion gave even more momentum to Biblical translations in the vernacular. Jan Schutken's translations of liturgical readings

⁹² *Bible in Duytsche* [Delftse Bijbel], [Prologus], fol. [2v]. A modern edition of the text of the Delft Bible is available in De Bruin (ed.), *De Delftse bijbel van 1477*.

⁹³ For literature in the late Middle Ages as an instrument to eliminate *acedia*, drive away melancholy and spend time profitably by acquiring moral instruction, see Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, pp. 67-72. See also Vermeulen, 'Tot profijt en genoeghen', p. 172.

contained selected books of the Gospels and Epistles (the *Epistelen en Evangelien*) and of the Psalms. The novelty of the Delft translation was that it did not contain any notes or commentary, just the Biblical text. Apart from his own contribution (with regard to Chronicles 1-2 and the Books of the Prophets) the Delft translator worked through the existing translations, producing a consistent literally faithful vernacular translation of the relevant parts of the Old Testament verified according to the Vulgate and edited to correspond to the then-prevalent standard of spelling in Holland. The Delft editors' decision to publish the Bible without the Psalms or the New Testament was simply the effect of late-medieval liturgical usage. The Psalms, as belonging in the *Horae*, would have been printed separately, similarly to the Gospel readings and the Epistles, which medieval readers knew as the separately-offered vernacular *Epistelen en Evangelien*.⁹⁴

Very little is known about the first Delft printers, but the Short Title Catalogue of the Netherlands, giving a list of most known incunables and early printed works, offers a window on their printing output and that of their successors at the threshold of the early-modern period.⁹⁵ A global overview of the products of Van der Meer and Yemantszoen, as well as of later printers at Delft, shows that works of theological instruction formed by far the largest category among the incunabula from their workshops. Out of an overall number of 148 identified books (printed before c. 1501), as many as 105 items can be placed unequivocally in a broad category of religious literature, leaving 43 books of a predominantly secular character. The figure for the Delft printing output in this period stands, therefore, at almost 71% religious books. This statistic leads us to ask – who were the readers of these books? Such a high rate of supply suggests that there must have been a corresponding demand for Catholic religious texts. Were the books produced for export or did the printers respond to local demand? While the general assumption is that significant quantities of books were exported,⁹⁶ their local reader-

⁹⁴ De Bruin, 'De Delftse bijbel in het licht der historie', pp. 1-32.

⁹⁵ To this date there exists no comprehensive monograph on the subject of printing and early printed literature in Delft. A general survey for this period is by Valkema Blouw, 'Drukkers en uitgevers in Delft', pp. 138-143. A marginal mention of printing in Delft, in the context of printing in the Netherlands, is made e.g. by De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Het Nederlandse boek', pp. 9-11 and by Van der Lof, 'Boekdrukkers en hun werk', pp. 11-27.

⁹⁶ This assumption is based on the general picture of book-printing and publishing in the 15th century presented by De la Fontaine Verwey, 'Het Nederlandse boek', pp. 6-16.

ship presents something of a mystery. Fortunately, the preserved inventory list of the books at St. Barbara's convent allows us to formulate an answer to this question.

Willem Moll, who in the 19th century identified the authorship of some (though not all) of the books at St. Barbara's convent, did not consistently attempt to connect them to the world of Delft printing. However, he did show that at least several incunables from this pioneering partnership of Van der Meer and Yemantszoen can be matched to the books recorded in the inventory of the convent of St. Barbara. The availability of the STCN catalogue vastly increased the chance of finding new matching titles, and indeed, some such items have now been positively identified (*see below*).⁹⁷ From this data there emerges an intriguing picture of a printers' portfolio whose contents were closely correlated to the reading profile of the inhabitants of a convent in the same town (and, as one might conjecture, this data could be true for other Delft monasteries as well).

This raises the obvious question of whether a convent owned the specific editions printed by Van der Meer and Yemantszoen or later printers. Such a question is interesting but irrelevant because, obviously, the convent might have owned manuscripts or other printed editions. However, the extent of this correlation is too large to be merely a coincidence. The fact that at least several books in the overall known portfolio of Van der Meer and Yemantszoen matched the library inventory of the inhabitants of St. Barbara's convent shows that vernacular reading (especially in the convents) and printing were by no means separate worlds. Rather, convent-dwelling readers and city-based printers occupied intersecting spheres and participated, through the new medium of print, in a spirited exchange of Christian theological and devotional literature.

A few examples can be given of this intersection of reading in the convent and printing in the city. The nuns' biography of Christ, *Boec van ons Heren leven* [48] and *Dat volcomen Ihesus leven van Griete Joestendochter* [106], ascribed by W. Moll to St. Bonaventura or to Ludolf von Sachsen,⁹⁸ can be matched thematically to *Dat leven ons Heren Jesu Christi* (1479) offered by Van der Meer and Yemantszoen. Their successor at the Delft workshop, Eckert van Homberch, also published a 'life of Christ', *Leven ons Heren* (1498). Interest in Marian miracles intersects in the same way with regard to the convent's collection, *ij boeken van*

⁹⁷ Based on an STCN query performed by the author (see **Annex 1**).

⁹⁸ Moll, *De boekerij van het St. Barbara-Klooster te Delft*, p. 25.

onzer vrouwen [26], and the Delft printers' *Miraculen onser liever Vrouwen* (1479).⁹⁹

The two Delft printers found a promising market for vernacular treatises which combined catechesis and moral instruction. One of these, *Summe de roy of des conincs summe* (1478), was a translation of Laurent d'Orléans' *Somme des vices et vertus*, a popular confession manual written for the French king Philip III.¹⁰⁰ In one passage, the author of the *Des conincs* (or *coninx*) *summe* addressed the differences between (and moral problems inherent in) the diverging ethical role-patterns offered by, respectively, the city-dwelling burgher and the aristocratic knight.¹⁰¹ It spoke of a concern to integrate the noble and non-noble groups of society into a Christian-Aristotelian order in which primacy of purpose was no longer assigned to the absolute status in the feudal hierarchy but to one's activities with respect to the *res publica* – the common interest (*ghemeyn oirbaer*).¹⁰² Van der Meer and Yemantszoen's vernacular translation was partly the work of the nobleman-turned-Carthusian Jan van Brederode (d. 1415) and partly of an anonymous (possibly Delft-based) translator.¹⁰³ The next book of this type that came on the market was a translation of Johannes de Tambaco's *Consolatio Theologiae* under the Dutch title *Vertroostinghe des menschen levens uit der heiliger schriften* (1479). The origins of this translation have been traced to the Carthusian monastery of Nieuwlicht near Utrecht.¹⁰⁴ Treatises such as these found access to a large city-dwelling audience, a lay one as well as a religious one. In our case, the sisters of St. Barbara's owned both of these titles, *Dat coninx sum ij warven* [42] and *Dat boec van der troestinghe* [43].¹⁰⁵ The presence of *Des conincs summe* in a nunnery is interesting, for al-

⁹⁹ *Miraculen onser liever Vrouwen*, Delft: Jacob Jacobsz van der Meer and Mauricius Yemantsz, 10 January 1477-26 July 1500 (ILC 1601). Moll, *De boekerij van het St. Barbara-Klooster te Delft*, p. 53.

¹⁰⁰ Tinbergen (ed.), *Des conincs summe*, pp. 17-18.

¹⁰¹ Tinbergen (ed.), *op. cit.*, nos. 378-379, p. 406. For a discussion of some passages from *Des conincs summe* in the context of late-medieval burgher ethics, cf. Brinkman, *Dichten uit liefde*, pp. 267-268.

¹⁰² Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, pp. 78-79; Brinkman, *Dichten uit liefde*, pp. 267-268.

¹⁰³ Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, inc. A 1578 LP. Cockx-Indestege, 'Frère Laurent d'Orléans', 193-194.

¹⁰⁴ De Bruin, 'De Delftse Bijbel in het licht der historie', p. 19.

¹⁰⁵ Moll identified this last item, without certainty, as an edition of Boethius' *De consolatio philosophiae*. Moll, *De boekerij van het St. Barbara-Klooster te Delft*, pp. 50 and 58.

though that book inevitably tended to be situated in the domain of the ethical preoccupations of the civic elites (both secular and religious),¹⁰⁶ its availability at St. Barbara's in Delft points to the fact that a Christian-Aristotelian perspective on society could potentially attract various categories of Christian readers (male and female, secular as well as religious) in a town-based environment.

Another popular religious treatise was Dionysius Carthusianus' and Gerardus de Vliederhoven's *Cordiale quattuor novissimorum*, a Latin edition of which was published in Delft in 1482 (again in 1486 and 1487). The same treatise was translated into the vernacular as *De vier uitersten* (three editions by Van der Meer between 1486 and 1488; again by Eckert van Homberch, before 1500). The nuns of the convent of St. Barbara owned two copies of this book.¹⁰⁷ A distinct category were chapbooks (*volksboeken*) containing religious and secular narrative works of literature in the vernacular. The Delft printers had much to offer in this department too. Their portfolio included, for instance, a 'history of the holy Three Kings', *Historien der heiliger drie coninghen* (1479) and a chivalric romance, the reworking of Gautier de Chastillon's *De gestis Alexandri Magni*, entitled *Die historie, dat leven ende dat regiment des coninc alexanders* (1479). By now it is probably no longer surprising that the nuns counted both of these books among their reading: *Item boec van den iij coningen* ([57] – not identified by Moll) and *Item van coninc Alexander* [105].

The religious publications which found their way into the convent were representative of the choices made by the Delft printers. Among the wide selection of religious works published by Van der Meer it is impossible not to mention Jacobus van Voragine's *Legenda aurea sanctorum*, which was frequently published in the vernacular (*Passionael: somerstuc* and *winterstuc*, 1482, 1484 and 1487; published by Snellaert in 1489). The *Passionael*, either in manuscript or in printed form, was in the possession of the convent of St. Barbara in Delft ([13] and [14]). The life of a native saint from the region of Delft, St. Lidwina of Schiedam (*Leven van Liedwij, die maghet van Schiedam*, 1487, 1490) by Johannes Gerlacus (c. 1400-1433) represented hagiography written for a Holland audience. One of the editions of this *vita* (not identified by Moll), belonged to the library of the nuns of St. Barbara: *Item salige Lyedwien boec* [103].

What appears out of this juxtaposition is that there existed in Delft, in the first place, a strong local market for incunables and early print-

¹⁰⁶ Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, pp. 78-79.

¹⁰⁷ Moll, *De boekerij van het St. Barbara-Klooster te Delft*, pp. 45-46.

ed books. Moreover, printing in Delft existed in a special 'triangle' that comprised various participants in the literary life of the town. The first (and most prominent) point of that triangle were the churches and monastic communities. These institutions were strongly interested in promoting Catholic religious identity in two ways: internally (through the spiritual and intellectual formation of the clergy and religious) and externally (as a means of spiritually (re-)forming Christian society). The two other points of this 'printing triangle' were occupied, respectively, by the Latin school and the lay civic elites. Here the interest was predominantly in the fields of philological education, law, history and practical Christian morality. Of course, it would be wrong to see any of these three groups of participants in the literary life of a medieval town as entirely autonomous from the remaining two. One should keep in mind the words of Herman Pleij, who cautioned against assigning late-medieval (printed) literature all too specifically to self-contained, clearly-outlined circles of readers.¹⁰⁸ The 'fields of interest' of all these institutions and their members overlapped, and although all of the participants involved in literary and cultural exchange had a distinct profile, they all shared, to a large degree, similar preoccupations and values, situating themselves within the same profoundly Christian society.¹⁰⁹

The contours of this 'triangle' become even more visible when the main themes of the literature printed in Delft are hypothetically matched to their dominant audiences (all the while keeping in mind the caveat referred to by Pleij). Van der Meer, whose name alone appeared in the colophon after 1479, maintained the mixed profile of the workshop's printing output, and preserved the dominant presence of theological works in Latin and the vernacular. Van der Meer's successor from 1488 was Christiaan Snellaert, who again diversified the printing output but maintained continuity with the profile of the preceding years. The most popular works of Christian theology offered by Snellaert continued to be printed (in the period between 1497 and 1500) by his successor at the Delft workshop, Henrick Eckert van Homberch. After Eckert's departure to Antwerp, the printers working in Delft were Cornelis Cornelissen (c. 1503?) and Henric Lettersnijder (1504-1511?); the latter was succeeded by his son, Cornelis Henricz (1516-1534, d. before 1541).¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, p. 510.

¹⁰⁹ The typology of civic literary life in the late-medieval Netherlands as a 'triangle' is intended to supplement the 'bipolar' model (parish church – private homes) which has been advanced by Goudriaan, 'Holland in de tijd van Leeu', pp. 31-60, esp. p. 53.

¹¹⁰ Valkema Blouw, 'Drukkers en uitgevers te Delft: de eerste eeuw', pp. 138-143.

Although secular books formed one of the lesser categories in Van der Meer's and Snellaert's portfolio, they are no less interesting for the information they provide about the tastes and preferences of their town-dwelling readers.¹¹¹ Van der Meer's and Snellaert's more adventurous readers would have preferred chivalric 'histories', among which were the classically-themed 'matter of Rome' (*Die gesten of gheschiedenissen van Romen*, 1483), a Dutch re-working of the *Gesta Romanorum*,¹¹² or the narrative of the 'seven wise men of Rome' (*Historie van de seven wise mannen van Romen*, 1483).¹¹³ A Christian-themed chivalric romance with a plot related to the Crusades was the *Historie van Seghelijn van Jerusalem* (1483-1486?). The chivalric Netherlandish romance about Charlemagne and Elegast (*Karel ende Elegast*) remains to this day a prized work from the Dutch literary canon. Its first printed edition was placed on the market by Snellaert in 1488. The category of 'historical non-fiction literature' was represented by a chronicle of the 'core' provinces of the northern Netherlands (*Chronike of historie van Hollant, Zeelant ende Vriesland*, 1483-1486?). Eike von Repgow's frequently-reprinted *Sachsen-spiegel* (*Spiegel van Sassen*, 1486-1488?; 1487-1491?) belonged to the category of law books. Its printing indicated that Holland was now part of the Holy Roman Empire, where legal practice was determined by Germanic common law.

Parenetic literature anchored in Christian ethics and printed in Latin and in the vernacular, constituted another sizable category of texts. These books ranged from a moralizing chess-playing manual by Jacob de Cessolis (*Boek dat men hiet dat scaecspel*, 1483) to Henric van Alckmaer's reworking of 'Reinart the Fox' (*Reinaert*), the animal allegory that holds to this day (in its earliest version) an undisputed place in the canon of Dutch literature (*Historie van Reynaert die vos*, 1485).¹¹⁴ *Die historien ende fabulen van Esopus die leerlic wonderlick ende seer ghenoechlick syn*,

¹¹¹ Based on a query in the Short Title Catalogue of the Netherlands (STCN) performed by the author, August 2011 (see Annex 1).

¹¹² *Die gesten of gheschiedenissen van Romen*, Delft, [Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer], 18 November 1483. No. 167 'Die gesten of gheschiedenissen van Romen' in: Van der Horst et al. (ed.), *Handschriften en Oude Drukken van de Utrechtse Universiteitsbibliotheek*, p. 317.

¹¹³ *Historie van de seven wise mannen van Romen*, Delft [Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer], 13 January 1483. No. 175 'Historie van de seven wise mannen van Romen' in: Van der Horst et al. (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 326.

¹¹⁴ There exists a vast literature on the original vernacular *Reinaert* and its interpretations; a highly relevant analysis of the literary and cultural facets of this complex narrative is by Dąbrowka, *Teatr i sacrum w średniowieczu*, pp. 7-33.

that is, the 'instructive, wonderful and pleasing' fables of Aesop, were offered in a Dutch translation by Henrick Eckert van Homberch (1498). The group of readers who found moralized games enjoyable would have been also interested in Jan van den Berghe's moralized handbook of the game of *kaatsen* (*Kaetspel gemoraliseert*, 1489).

Parenetic works, which formed the staple of the Delft publishers' portfolio since 1477, enjoyed much popularity. Here were (once again) Laurent d'Orléans *Somme des vices et vertus* (*Summe de roy of des conincs summe*, 1482) and Jean Boutiller's *Somme rurale* (*Somme rurael*, 1483). Albertanus Brixiensis' *De arte loquendi et tacendi*, a treatise on speaking and maintaining silence, was published in translation as *Van die konste van spreken ende van swighen* (1487-1491? and again 1493-1496?). Another Christian parenetic text concerned the proper way of structuring family life. This was pseudo-Bernard of Clairvaux's *Epistola de gubernatione rei familiaris*, in the vernacular translation entitled *Hoe men dat huysghesinne regeren sal* (1493-1500?). Guillaume de Digulleville's *Le pèlerinage de la vie humaine* was a treatise with moral instruction for those journeying on 'the pilgrimage of the human life'. It was translated into Dutch and printed in Delft as *Boek van den pelgrim* (1498).

Perhaps the most influential Christian parenetic text ever written in the Dutch language was the morality play *Spiegel der salicheyt van Elckerlyc* ('The mirror of salvation of Everyman').¹¹⁵ The quest of a protagonist, 'Elckerlijc' or Everyman, who, nearing death, is given a chance to reconcile himself with God through confession and penance is an allegorical *ars moriendi* in the form of a play (*zinnespel* or *esbattement*) in which vices, virtues and theological entities are given the form of speaking figures. The first known printed edition of the *Elckerlijc* was the one issued in Delft by Snellaert between 1493 and 1496 (*Boecxken ghemaect in een maniere van enen spele oft batimente op Elckerlijck*). The text was probably written (and certainly performed) in Antwerp, a city with a vibrant culture of allegorical performance and public dialogue-on-stage. Snellaert has been connected to Antwerp through his contacts with the Gouda printer Gerard Leeu, who moved to that city in 1484, as well as through ties to the Antwerp chamber of rhetoric *De violieren* and its star-rhetorician Jan Casus.¹¹⁶ The printing of the *Elckerlijc* in Delft is another example of the cultural ties connecting the provinces to the

¹¹⁵ For *Elckerlijc*'s relation to the generic and thematic categories of medieval religious drama see Dąbrowska, *Teatr i sacrum w średniowieczu*, pp. 453-472.

¹¹⁶ Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, p. 404; Oosterman, 'De bakermat van Anna Bijns', pp. 155-160; Brinkman, 'Weerzien met Geraardsbergen', pp. 11-13.

north and south of the great rivers during the Burgundian period. It is also a sign that in the cultural climate fostered by the book-printers of Delft around 1500 the most refined and *avant-garde* literature of the urban elites (for such was the status of the *Elckerlijc*) reached a harmonious balance with the significant theological narratives of the Catholic Church to which that literature gave expression.

The printing and reception of *Elckerlijc* in Delft should not be seen in isolation but in the context of other religious books related to Christian teaching on the immortality of the soul and on the ways of attaining salvation. Whereas *Elckerlijc* showed a righteous Christian who ultimately amended his life, availed himself of the Sacraments and died with the hope of attaining salvation, other books were devised to warn those Christians who stood in risk of forsaking eternal life. One of these was the 'Vision of Tundale' (*Visio Tnugdalis*), a hugely popular visionary narrative describing a passage into hell of the Irish knight Tundale (Dutch: *Tondalis*). The original *Visio Tnugdalis* was written around the year 1150 in Latin at Regensburg by the Irish Benedictine monk Marcus and henceforth disseminated through countless vernacular translations in various European languages and through a series of intermediary texts, including the *Speculum historiale* of Vincent of Beauvais.¹¹⁷ One of the editions of the *Visio* materialized in Delft as *Dat boek van Tondalus visioen*, printed by Christiaen Snellaert on 27 November 1495.¹¹⁸ To the same series of religious chapbooks instructing the reader on the situation of the damned and on the ways of avoiding this fate belongs the narrative of Arent Bosman, a young man from the duchy of Cleves who underwent a spiritual conversion after witnessing a vision of souls suffering for their sins in purgatory. Two editions of this book were printed in Delft between 1486 and 1491.¹¹⁹ Additionally, handwritten copies or

¹¹⁷ For the Middle English and Latin texts see e.g. Gardiner, *Visions of Heaven and Hell Before Dante*, pp. 149–95; Easting, *Visions of the Other World in Middle English*, pp. 70–80. For the Middle Dutch texts see Blommaert, *Oudvlaemsche gedichten*, vol. ii, pp. 29–72; Verdeyen, Endepols, *Tondalus' visioen*. Tundale is mentioned in Lodewijk van Velthem's romance of Lancelot, see Jonckbloet (ed.), *Roman van Lancelot*, vol. i, p. xlvii.

¹¹⁸ *Dat boek van Tondalus visioen*, Delft: C. Snellaert, 27 November 1495 (CA[i] 1689).

¹¹⁹ Cf. Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, p. 200. *Van Arent Bosman; een mirakel dat geschiede int jaar 1433 in den lande van Cleve*, Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert], [between 29 November 1486 and 26 June 1488] (CA-Kron 355c); *Van Arent Bosman; een mirakel dat geschiede int jaar 1433 in den lande van Cleve*, Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 1 March 1487 and 10 August 1491] (CA 356).

printed editions of the visions of Tundale and of Bosman were kept in the library of St. Barbara's Convent at Delft.¹²⁰

Symbolically heralding the rise of a 'northern humanism' in the Netherlands, but still in all respects embedded within the thinking of the Middle Ages, an edition of Horace's *De arte poetica* was published by Cornelis Cornelissen in Delft on 20 December 1503.¹²¹ This event must be seen as the tip of the proverbial iceberg, because works of Latin literature were copied and distributed in Delft up to three decades before that date. On 15 June 1474, an unknown copyist from Delft finished a manuscript containing six comedies by the Roman dramatist Terence, a popular author of school drama during the Middle Ages. For this reason it can be assumed that this particular manuscript was produced either for the library of a cloister or, what is even more likely, for the Latin school of Delft which existed from 1342. The rather rough appearance of that manuscript and the marginal comments scribbled in its deliberately wide margins lend support to the latter hypothesis.¹²²

Another indication of the dawn of new humanist trends in the transmission of literature in Delft in the final decades of the 15th century was the printing by Van der Meer or Snellaert of *De duobus amantibus* (4 October [1496-1491]), a widely-read epistolary novel about a tragic and illicit love-affair between Euryalus and a married woman, Lucretia, written by Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (1405-1464), the later Pope Pius II.¹²³ This fictional and perhaps even scandalizing narrative appears to have been

¹²⁰ [98] *Tondalus*; [100] *Heynrijcx Bosman*, mentioned in the book inventory of the Convent of St. Barbara, cf. Moll, *De boekerij van het St. Barbara-Klooster te Delft*, respectively p. 52 and p. 58. Moll does not provide an explanation for the name 'Heynrijcx'. Most probably it originated from the German version where 'Arent Bosman' became known as 'Heinrich Buschmann'. Cf. Palmer, '*Visio Tnugdali*': *The German and Dutch translations*, p. 401.

¹²¹ The cultural geography of 'northern humanism' and its relation to the 'northern Renaissance' has been analyzed by Borowski, *Pojęcie i problem „renesansu północnego”*, esp. pp. 73-82 ('Limes Imperii Romani and the problem of the limits of the Renaissance') and pp. 89-112 ('The northern "Barbaricum" and the problem of a northern Renaissance').

¹²² Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek Hs. 806. See 'Terentius, Comoediae VI', no. 32, Van der Horst et al. (ed.), *Handschriften en Oude Drukken van de Utrechtse Universiteitsbibliotheek*, pp. 90-93; Chavannes-Mazel, 'Delftse handschriften en boekverluchting', pp. 135-138.

¹²³ A modern edition of this narrative can be consulted: Piccolomini, von Wyle, *A tale of two lovers*, ed. by Morrall. For the relation of the Delft edition to other early editions of this text, see Morrall, 'Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini (Pius II), *Historia de duobus amantibus*', pp. 216-229.

something of an exception in the output of secular books published in Latin, because the vast majority of such publications were aimed at the educational sector, especially the Latin school in Delft and other similar institutions in the region. The intellectual climate of these schools cannot yet be called a humanist one.¹²⁴ The books destined for the Latin schools included, for instance, a *florilegium* of Latin authors, the *Flores poetarum de virtutibus et vitiis, sive sententiae* (1487) and a grammar-book, Johannes de Garlandia and Johannes Synthen's *Composita verborum* (1488).

Books with an educational content continued to dominate in Snel-laert's portfolio during the 1490s. Works such as Alexander de Villa Dei's *Doctrinale*, annotated by Johannes Synthen (1496) or Alexander Hegius (later editions) were indispensable for the schooling of a coming generation of humanists. A new class of administrators trained at humanist schools could learn, for example, from a handbook of practical rhetoric, Paulus Lescherius' *Rhetorica pro conficiendis epistolis accommodata* (1496), or the anonymous manual of letter-writing, *Elegantiarum viginti praecepta [ad perpulcras conficiendas epistolas]* (1496). Meanwhile, the more seldom-represented category of classical philosophical literature was supplied by an edition of *Disticha de moribus* of Dionysius Cato (c. 1493-1500).

Despite the rather high production of books in Latin, in the period between c. 1480 and c. 1550 this category of literature did not over shadow books in the vernacular, even though the selection of books that appeared in the workshops of Delft printers shows that the demand for such texts was not negligible. Secular and religious priests living in Delft were by far the most significant group among the town-dwellers who purchased and read printed religious publications in Latin. By the late 15th century a new and prestigious category of Catholic theological works in Latin was offered to churchmen by the versatile Delft printer Snel-laert. These were Latin missals, such as the *Missale leodiense* (1495) and *Missale Traiectense* (two editions in 1495). That Snellaert was contracted to print such complex and sensitive liturgical texts such as these missals can be interpreted as an expression of the confidence placed in his skill by the ecclesiastical authorities in the Netherlands.

On orders from the Church, the Delft printers published manuals on the proper pastoral use of indulgences: Utrecht bishop David of Burgundy's *Mandata cum clausulis indulgentiarum* with a *Taxa facultatum in indulgentiis contentarum* by Raimundus Peraudi (1483), Peraudi's *In-*

¹²⁴ On the relation of early humanism to the Latin school see Borowski, *Pojęcie i problem „renesansu północnego”*, pp. 114-115.

dulgentia, promoting war against the Turks (1484), or Pope Sixtus IV's *Summaria declaratio bullae indulgentiarum ecclesiae Xanctonensi pro reparationes eiusdem et pro tuitione concessarum* (between 1483 and 1486). A treatise in which the theological foundations for the practice of indulgences were discussed was Johannes de Fabrica's *De indulgentiis pro animabus in purgatorio, sive Super declaratione indulgentiarum* (between 1483 and 1486). After a pause in the last decade of the 15th century, the printing of this kind of theological material resumed at Henric Pietersz Lettersnijder's workshop, where Henricus Caligis' treaty on indulgences, the *Tractatulus super materia indulgentiarum*, appeared in 1508.

Some texts were of a general theological nature. Originating in the 13th century was Adamus Alderspacensis' *Summula Sacramentorum* (1497). Other manuals dealt with specific key areas of theology, for example the Sacrament of the Eucharist. To this group belonged Van der Meer's edition of Johannes de Turrecremata's *Tractatus de venerabili sacramento [de corpore Christi]* (1480?). The Sacrament of Confession was dealt with, for instance, in Antoninus Florentinus' *Confessionale: Defecerunt scrutantes scrutinio* (1482) or Johannes de Garlandia and Petrus Blesensis' *Libellus de modo poenitendi et confitendi* (1494). *Formula vivendi canonicorum* (1496) by Werner Rolevinck (1425-1492) was another in the long string of Latin theological manuals prepared by Van der Meer and Snel-laert for an educated priestly audience in the 1480s and 1490s. Its author, a Carthusian monk from Laer in the Netherlands living in Cologne, was the author of a historical work, the *Fasciculum temporis* and of a number of theological works which point to his affinity with scholastic learning and the Modern Devotion. Rolevinck's *Formula vivendi canonicorum* was printed at Cologne by Arnold ther Hoernen, c. 1471-1475;¹²⁵ it is possible, therefore, that the Delft printer used a German edition of Rolevinck's treatise as his source.

Another more prominent category, also intended for a priestly readership, were Latin liturgical manuals. These included *Manuale parochialium sacerdotum* (1496) and a guide to correcting liturgical abuses, *Resolutionum dubiorum circa celebrationem missarum occurrentium* (1497) by Johannes Heynlin (Johannes de Lapide). A treatise against sacrilege was *Oratio quaerulosa contra invasores sacerdotum* (two editions between 14 February 1494 and 1495) written by the Strasbourg theologian Jacobus Wimpheling in reaction to the Hussite movement of the early 15th cen-

¹²⁵ A copy of this edition is preserved at the University Library, Utrecht (A qu 311⁷ rariora). See Van der Horst et al. (eds.), *Handschriften en Oude Drukken van de Utrechtse Universiteitsbibliotheek*, no. 63, pp. 154-155.

tury. Wimpeling's book would have been of interest to Delft readers because a group of the town's burghers had travelled to Bohemia in 1422 to take part in the conflict with the Hussites. After returning safely to Delft these citizens founded the influential confraternity of the Holy Sacrament at the Church of St. Hippolyte.¹²⁶

When the late 15th and early 16th century is compared with later decades (before 1572), this period appears as a 'Golden Age' of the printing and distribution of Catholic literature in Delft. Yet there are fluctuations to be discerned here as well, for the microcosm of book production and consumption in Delft also reveals the changing profile of religious publications. The demand for Latin missals or liturgical treatises, on the examples published by Van der Meer and Snellaert, was clearly not upheld during the tenure of Eckert van Homberch and his successors at Delft in the first decades of the 16th century. Book production in the field of religious vernacular literature (together with a handful of devotional texts in Latin), however, continued without major interruption. Here again, several important clusters of publications, intended for religious (but also lay) readers, can be discerned.

An important item among Van der Meer's publications, continuing the line of the *Bible in Duytsche* from 1477, was the vernacular Psalter (*Die duytsche souter*) which appeared in 1480 and again in 1487.¹²⁷ A frequently re-published work were the Gospels and Epistles with commentary, *Epistelen ende evangeliën metten sermoenen vanden gheheelē iare* (five editions between 1481-1488). Additionally Van der Meer supplied the *Horae* in Dutch (*Getijdenboek*, 1480; *Ghetyden van onser liever Vrouwen*, 1484). Henrick Eckert van Homberch continued this trend by publishing a vernacular book of hours (1498) and a breviary of the Augustinian Chapter of Windesheim, *Breviarium Windeshemense* (1499).

Van der Meer and Snellaert's best-sellers, judging by the number of reprints, were works of Christian practical theology in the vernacular. A popular and frequently-reprinted work on the subject of Christian catechesis was Dietrich Kolde's (1435-1515) *Kerstenspiegel*.¹²⁸ The *Opus*

¹²⁶ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 289. To the bibliography provided by Oosterbaan (*op. cit.*, p. 295, n. 14) one may add that Opmeer in *Officium Missae*, pp. 424-425, refers also to the war with the Hussites led by Jan Žižka ('Zischa'). Van Bleyswijk contended that the Dutch participants in the anti-Hussite campaign later helped to disseminate Hussite ideas in the Netherlands, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 147.

¹²⁷ The 1480 edition has been preserved as N.U.B. Inc 52.

¹²⁸ Dietrich Kolde, *Kerstenspiegel*, Delft: [C. Snellaert or H. Eckert, between 23 Sept. 1493 and 1500] (CA[I] 599a); Dietrich Kolde, *Kerstenspiegel*, Delft, C. Snellaert,

tripartitum de praeceptis Decalogi, de confessione et de arte moriendi by Paris theologian Jean de Gerson (1363-1429) was published in translation under the title *Salicheit der menschen* (1482). Other works in this category included, for instance, a 'mirror of eternal life' (*Spiegel des ewigen levens*, 1480), a manual for confession (*Boec van der biechten*, 1480), and an *ars moriendi* (*Dat sterf boeck*, 1488). For vernacular readers Christiaen Snellaert published a 'mirror of perfection' (*Spiegel der volcomenheit*) with a manual by Simon of Venlo on the significance of the Mass and on the proper manner of receiving the Eucharist (*Devote oefening ende beduidenis der missen. Bereydinge om het H. Sacrament te ontvangen* (1490)). The orthodox German mystic Henricus Suso's *Büchlein der Ewigen Weisheit* (a book that we have seen at the library of St. Barbara's convent) was published in the vernacular by Van der Meer in 1485.

The final decades of the 15th century, from 1477 till 1493, were exceedingly volatile in political terms. From a dynastic point of view, however, there was nothing that suggested instability. Both Mary of Burgundy and her son Philip had captured the imagination of most of their subjects and Mary was moreover known for her exceptional piety. When she died in 1482, the Holland chronicler Cornelis Aurelius remembered that her passing away 'was especially lamented by the poor and religious persons, whom she helped like a caring mother'. Furthermore, Mary had caused numerous male monasteries to be reformed ('die seere beclaecht wert vanden armen / ende sonderlinghe religieusen personen, dien ys als een goedertieren moeder bystont ende te hulpe quam / en hadde menich clooster van mannen gereformeert ende doen reformeren'), whereas the benefices and prebends that Mary of Burgundy offered to churches went towards helping 'honorable learned men, especially poor priests and clerics studying theology' ('geleerde mannen van eerbaren leuen / sonderlinge arme Priesters ende clercken die in Theologie / dats inde H. Schriften studeren'). In an effort to strengthen pastoral presence, the beneficiaries of Mary's charitable donations were now obliged to reside in the churches from which they received a stipend.¹²⁹

When Mary of Burgundy died in a riding accident in 1482, the Netherlands faced a political crisis as it was unclear who should rule in the name of the heir to the throne, the four year-old Philip.¹³⁰ On one side was Mary's husband Maximilian Habsburg and loyal nobility. On the

[1495 or 1496] (CA[I] 599b); Dietrich Kolde, *Kerstenspiegel*, [Delft, J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 1 March 1487 and 10 Aug. 1491].

¹²⁹ [Aurelius], *Die cronycke van Hollant*, fol. 257v.

¹³⁰ [Aurelius], *op. cit.*, fol. 239v.

other side there stood a loose coalition of towns and delegates to the States General (especially from Flanders and Brabant) united through their opposition to what they regarded as Maximilian's abuses of power, specifically excessive taxation and an invasive bureaucracy. After 1477 Maximilian reversed the concessions of provincial sovereignty, to which Mary, under pressure, had been forced to agree, and then proceeded to quench the rebellion of the Flemish cities and, in Holland, to suppress an insurrection by the *Hoek* camp in what was a fresh revival of the long-simmering conflict between opposing groups of *Hoeken* and *Kabeljauwen*.¹³¹ To achieve the latter goal, Maximilian made it his strategy to promote, for the first time during the Burgundian period, loyal Holland nobles from the *Kabeljauw* faction to the court and higher offices.¹³²

In 1482, when the Netherlands found themselves once more at a crossroads, Maximilian faced the discontent of the States General, and especially the southern province of Flanders and the large southern cities. The political confrontation that followed was in some ways a revival of the conflicts that had raged in the Netherlands since the final years of the reign of Charles the Bold and which had been temporarily brought to a close by the Great Privilege (1477). The States General, disaffected with the continuing war with France, high taxation and the infringement of privileges, sought to exploit the moment of political uncertainty by calling for the monarch to grant concessions. The intermittent revolts by independent-minded cities against monarchic authority, especially in the southern Netherlands (Flanders), continued unabatedly until 1492.¹³³ A most unpleasant moment for Maximilian came in 1487 when he found himself imprisoned for three months in Bruges while his administrators there were executed by the rebels; by an ironic twist of fate, just a few years earlier, in 1483, Maximilian had had to rescue bishop David of Burgundy from similarly straitened circumstances at Utrecht.

The military situation after 1477 was additionally complicated by the intervention of the French king Louis XI and then of his successor Charles VIII, who sent his forces into Flanders. On the Habsburg side in the early 1490s foreign troops were dispatched from Germany. The conflict between Maximilian's roving armies of German mercenaries and the Flemish cities degenerated into a war of attrition which left large tracts of the countryside unfarmed and depopulated. Factional division among the anti-Habsburg towns and the meager assistance for the rebels

¹³¹ Blockmans and Prevenier, *De Bourgondiërs*, pp. 220-221.

¹³² Sicking, 'De integratie van Holland', p. 269.

¹³³ Israel, *Dutch Republic*, p. 30.

from the French, allowed Maximilian to gradually regain control over the situation. The revolt dragged on until 1489, the year in which Maximilian of Habsburg finally left the Netherlands upon becoming Holy Roman Emperor, but the war was not entirely extinguished until 1492. The social fabric was in tatters and the inevitable consequence of war was starvation and violence.¹³⁴ Maximilian was succeeded in 1493 by the then fifteen-year-old Philip the Fair.

In 1497 Philip officially entered Holland, making a tour of all cities, including Delft. To welcome him the towns staged all kinds of allegorical 'silent figures', plays (*esbattementen*), 'joyous entries' and triumphal processions ('daer worden vele costelicke batamenten ende stomme figuren getoont / dat te lang ware te schrijuen / die pomperien ende costlichkeiten van tootsen ende vyeren / ende andere triumphen die in allen steden gheschieden ende ghedaen werden').¹³⁵

In 1496 a double marriage took place. Philip the Fair married Joanna of Castile, while his sister, Margaret, married Joanna's brother Ferdinand of Aragon. This marriage eventually produced a dynastic union between Spain, the Habsburg dominions in central Europe, and the Netherlands. Eventually, it also produced a new political climate in Europe, for as a result France came to be encircled by Habsburg possessions. After Philip's unexpected death in 1506, the Netherlands were ruled by Margaret of Austria (1506-1515) until the coming of age of her nephew Charles of Burgundy (1500-1558), the future king of Spain (1517) and Holy Roman Emperor. The reign of Philip (1493-1506), followed by that of his successor, the regent Margaret of Austria (1506-1515), ushered in a unique period of political stability. A favorable international configuration, in which the Netherlands were not at the heart of any major European conflict (apart from troublesome local wars with Gelderland and Frisia), ensured that the seventeen provinces enjoyed 'a period of exceptional peace'¹³⁶ under their Catholic rulers.

It is not unmerited, therefore, to speak of the early 16th century as being in some respects a continuation of the 15th century 'Golden Age' of the Burgundian Netherlands. This opinion finds some grounds in historical sources, even though for most a reference to a 'Golden Age' was a culturally-laden expression of hope and aspiration rather than a statement about the reality of daily life. For the secular and religious members of the civic elites in the Netherlands the term 'Golden Age' had

¹³⁴ Blockmans, Prevenier, *De Bourgondiërs*, pp. 217-226.

¹³⁵ [Aurelius], *Die cronycke van Hollant*, fol. 253v.

¹³⁶ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 29.

a Christian dimension relating to the well-being of the entire polity (*polis*). As one Flemish priest writing to Charles V around the year 1519 observed, if only he, the sovereign, remained a man of true Christian principles, then the coming years under his reign could become for his subjects in the Netherlands a veritable 'Golden Age' (*aurea aetas*) like the one the ancient poets had written so much about.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ '[...] uwe ondersaten sullen de wyle sy u tot eenen Prince hebben, de gulde eeuwen, daer de poeten soo veel fabulen af versiert hebben, nu waerachtelijck genieten'. Van Coudenbergh, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, p. 187.

2. CASE STUDY:
A LITERARY NETWORK IN DELFT AROUND 1500.
DIRCK ADAMSZON VAN DER BURCH
AND THE CONFRATERNITY
OF THE SEVEN SORROWS OF THE VIRGIN MARY

In the late-15th century, Christ-centered piety situated around the Passion found a new counterpart in the Netherlands in the form of a Marian devotion whose object was meditation on the Seven Sorrows that the Mother of God endured during her earthly life, especially during the Calvary and Crucifixion (*Zeven Weeën van Onze Lieve Vrouw*). Apart from its religious qualities the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows was a network of vernacular readers and writers whose activities, falling roughly in the period 1482-1521 and later, must be placed in the larger religious and literary universe of the Netherlands and in the smaller religious and literary worlds of Netherlandish cities such as Delft.

Around 1482 Jan van Coudenberghe, a priest and secretary to Philip the Fair, who was deeply moved by the political turmoil of the preceding decade, became involved in devotion to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary. In 1492 the young duke took under his protection the newly-established confraternity of the Virgin Mary of the Seven Sorrows (*Broederschap van de Zeven Weeën van Onze Lieve Vrouw*).¹ Instrumental in ensuring Philip's participation and patronage over the cult were his confessor, Michael Franciscus de Insulis, and his tutor, Frans Busleiden. From the southern Netherlands the devotion to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary spread to Delft and other towns in Holland. Represented in Delft since c. 1500, it was cultivated by the curate of the Old (St. Ursula's) Church, Dirck Adamsz van der Burch (d. 1531). There, as in other cities, the worshipping of the Virgin Mary of the Seven Sorrows

¹ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Weeen*, pp. 181-198.

was propagated through publications in Latin and the vernacular, and through the new medium of printed devotional illustrations.²

2.1. METHODOLOGICAL QUESTIONS

The devotion of the Seven Sorrows in the Netherlands, and its literary products in Delft and in other cities, must be seen in relation to three areas of research: 1) the theological contents of the devotion itself, 2) the socio-historical context of the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows and the (real or ascribed) political or religious motivations of its members, and 3) the miracles, confirmed through contemporary accounts and related in devotional literature, which occurred in various cities of the Low Countries (esp. Delft) in conjunction with this devotion.

It is important to distinguish all three of these factors and to treat them as interrelated but, at the same time, as distinct from one another. Each of these three factors had its own dynamic and therefore each, in its own way, demands a specifically tailored methodological approach. For instance, when the religious side is not thoroughly taken into consideration, then the field of research on the devotion of the Seven Sorrows (as well as on its literary networks and the products of these networks) invariably ends up being narrowed down to mainly material or even, as

² Sources on the devotion of the Seven Sorrows in the Netherlands include:

Jan van Coudenbergh, *Ortus, progressus et impedimenta fraternitatis beatissime virginis Marie*, Antwerp: Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten, 23 November 1519 is the primary source, an enlarged compilation of existing publications; a reliable vernacular translation of a reprint of the 1519 text arranged by Georges Colvenier is to be found in *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, pp. 181-263 (the copy used here is from the University Library, Utrecht, THO: WRT-48-310).

Liber authenticus sacratissimae utriusque sexus christifidelium confraternitatis septem dolorum beatae Mariae virginis nuncupatae (Stadsarchief Brussel, MS 3413) is a membership list of the confraternity maintained in the southern Netherlands.

Sources on the history of the devotion include: [Delehay], 'La Vierge aux sept glaives', pp. 333-352; Lépicier, *Mater dolorosa*; Holweck, 'Feasts of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary' in: *TCE*, vol. xiv, pp. 151-152; for the Netherlands, Soulier, *La Confrérie de Notre-Dame des Sept Douleurs*, Kronenburg, *Maria's heerlijkheid in Nederland*, vol. 2, pp. 257-259; Duclos, *De eerste eeuw van het Broederschap der Zeven Weedommen van Maria*.

Iconography of the Seven Sorrows in late-medieval Europe: Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', pp. 5-28. Preserved devotional prints from Delft: Rijksprentenkabinet (Rijksmuseum Amsterdam) inv. nr. OB 2123, inv. nr. OB 2124, inv. nr. 1912-385.

it is the case in some recent research, to the arguably 'political' aspects of that devotion. The main disadvantage of a such a 'politicizing' approach is that it fails to adequately account for the richness and diversity (in literary, but also in cultural and social terms) of this devotion in the entire context of the Catholic literary identity of the Low Countries in the early-modern period. Below, our objective will be to situate the networks of Seven Sorrows literature not, as it has been done until now, mainly in the circles of the Burgundian-Habsburg court, but in the context of Netherlandish towns, where late-medieval Christian-Aristotelian ethics interacted with various forms of religious practices intensely focused on the Passion of Christ and the suffering of the Virgin Mary. We will examine whether a city such as Delft, which grew into the most prominent center of the devotion between 1500 and 1520, can really be called exceptional or rather representative with regard to the nature of this cult (as described in the relevant sources), its duration and the participants involved in its literary networks.

The objectives of the Devotion of the Seven Sorrows (as well as the objectives of the related literature conveying information about the practice of the cult and its miracles) are commonly coupled in recent research to the aims of Burgundian-Habsburg political propaganda.³ It is claimed, for instance, that the devotion of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary was, in the first place, a 'dynastic devotion', 'a form of sophisticated dynastic propaganda',⁴ or part of 'a strategy of creating political allegiance through devotional communication'.⁵ Some scholars (esp. S. Speakman Sutch and A.-L. van Bruaene) claim to show that:

[...] the ultimate goal of the promoters of the devotion of the Seven Sorrows was to offer devotees a *political confession* [emphasis mine – MP] to adhere to, in the sense that worshippers who took up the practice of meditation on the Seven Sorrows also subscribed to the political ideal of peace and territorial unity in the Low Countries under the guidance of the Burgundian-Habsburg dynasty.⁶

³ Sources on the (variously interpreted) interface between politics and religion in the context of the conflict of 1482-1492 include: Stellingwerf, 'Een Vlaamse vredesbeweging uit 1482'; Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin'. For recent research which presupposes that the devotion of the Seven Sorrows was above all an instrument of Burgundian-Habsburg political propaganda, see esp. Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', pp. 252-278; Van Bruaene, 'The Habsburg Theatre State', pp. 131-150; Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, pp. 66-71.

⁴ Van Bruaene, 'The Habsburg Theatre State', p. 136.

⁵ Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', pp. 254.

⁶ Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, *op. cit.*, pp. 272.

The devotion of the Seven Sorrows in the Netherlands around 1490-1500 is considered, in other words, almost without exception as the causal product of a set of non-religious objectives. Consequently, the strictly religious contents of the worship (and therefore its literary products such as explanatory tracts and accounts of miracles) receive hardly any attention at all on their own terms, but are treated merely as a reflection of an (inferred) 'political' agenda.

The position most recently taken by researchers on the devotion of Seven Sorrows in Delft has been to suggest that the worship in that city deviated from the general model of a 'political confession' which (according to the same scholars) best defines the cult in the Netherlands during the period 1492-1520. It has been argued, for instance, that Delft was exceptional because '[...] both administrators and devotees (mostly women) considered the miraculous cult of the Seven Sorrows above all else as a local or, at the most, regional devotion and, thereby, inevitably lost touch with its original message of territorial unity'.⁷ This discrepancy, thus posited by S. Speakman Sutch and A.-L. van Bruaene, between on the one hand the cult of the Seven Sorrows in the Netherlands, and on the other hand, its specific manifestations in the civic environment of Delft, certainly invites a closer discussion.

The ultimate question then is whether it is justified to describe the Seven Sorrows devotion (in the form in which it appeared in the Netherlands in the last decades of the 15th century) exclusively or predominantly in terms of a Burgundian-Habsburg political agenda. For where on the one hand we have (or so it might seem), a strategy formulated by a cabal of clerics and courtiers conniving to 'pacify urban society and to appropriate its institutions and its media'⁸ through a religious devotion, on the other hand we encounter, in the identical early-modern literary media, expressions of a pre-existing religious climate and the testimony of the experience of ordinary individuals – the latter mainly in the form of miracles of healing through the intercession of the Virgin Mary that were such an essential part of Catholic identity in Holland and Zeeland both before and after the Reformation.

In the following sections the literature produced to promote the devotion of the Seven Sorrows will be examined in the context of its ongoing interaction with late-medieval Passion literature and the cult of the Passion (**Chapters 2.2.-2.3.**), before analysing the claims made by scholars regarding the 'political' aims of the devotion (**Chapter 2.4.**). Particular

⁷ Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

⁸ *Ibid.*

attention will be paid to the inter-provincial city-based literary circuits which involved Jan van Coudenberghe and other priests, religious and lay people in the Low Countries (**Chapter 2.5.**) and the survival of these networks and of the devotion itself in Delft up to and even after the Dutch Revolt (**Chapters 2.6.-2.7.**).

2.2. LITERARY CONTEXTS: LATE-MEDIEVAL PASSION LITERATURE IN DELFT

Historically, the devotion to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary is but a small fragment of the Christian tradition of worship concentrated on the Passion of Christ and on the parallel suffering of the Virgin Mary as the sorrowful Mother of God which evolved in medieval Europe from the 12th/13th century. The sorrows of Mary, standing under the Cross, became the particular theme of the Servite Order which had been founded in 1233 by seven patricians from Florence. On 15 August 1239 the Virgin Mary appeared to the Servites cloistered on Monte Senario, near Florence, requesting that her sorrows be a special object of veneration.⁹ The Servites, along with the orders of the Franciscans and Dominicans, popularized this form of Marian devotion. The result was that '[...] by the late thirteenth century, affective descriptions of Mary's sorrows were familiar to all Catholics through a wide variety of sources – Passion tracts, Passion plays, sermons, hymns and theological treatises'.¹⁰ An early source on the pictorial representation of the devotion is, for instance, a 14th century French illuminated catechetic codex (BnF Colbert 1432) containing a series of finely executed illustrations depicting the Sorrows of the Virgin Mary. In the late Middle Ages there was no consensus on the number of dolours to be worshipped. In BnF Colbert 1432 these sorrows are six in number. The scene of the crucifixion shows the Virgin Mary standing under the cross, her heart pierced by a sword.¹¹ One of the most common late-medieval Latin Passion hymns

⁹ Holweck, 'Feasts of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary' in: *TCE*, vol. xiv, pp. 151-152, 'Servants of Mary (Order of Servites)' in: *TCE*, vol. xiii, pp. 736-737.

¹⁰ Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 10.

¹¹ Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France Colbert 1432 (Français 400; Regius 7011), fol. 83 – the prophecy of Simeon; fol. 84 – the flight into Egypt; fol. 85 – the loss of Jesus in the temple of Jerusalem; fol. 86 – the Arrestation of Jesus; fol. 87 – the Cruci-

sung throughout Christian Europe, and which gave voice to the anguish of the Virgin Mary under the Cross, was the hymn *Stabat Mater dolorosa*... attributed to the Franciscan Giacomone da Todi (1306).

In Delft the Passion-centered worship of Christ's suffering featured most strongly in the mystical experience of the venerable Geertruyd van Oosten, a 14th century mystic and stigmatic who, according to later accounts, sought to unite herself in compassion to the suffering of Christ. In the graphic depiction of one late-medieval source (the chronicle of Cornelis Aurelius, 1517) Geertruyd was presented as adoring the crucified Christ in individual meditation, possibly in the chapel of the beguinage.¹² The veneration of the Passion of Christ coupled with a meditation on the sorrows of the Mother of God led in the Netherlands to the appearance of devotional brotherhoods dedicated to this specific religious theme. A brotherhood of the Passion, which had as its theme the Holy Cross, was established at the Old Church at Delft around 1394 by Johannes de Witte (d. 1434). It is known of this brotherhood that it was involved in devotion to the Virgin Mary, obviously in the context of the Crucifixion of Christ.¹³ A provincial synod in Cologne (1423) established a feast commemorating the compassion of the Virgin Mary under the Cross to expiate the iconoclasm of the Hussites.¹⁴ The archdiocese of Cologne, where this feast was to be kept on the Friday after the third Sunday after Easter, covered vast areas of the Netherlands, including the bishoprics of Liège and Utrecht. Simultaneously, in the Netherlands there evolved numerous artistic representations of the Passion of Christ and the sorrow of His Mother, for instance the diptychs from the Flemish atelier of Dieric and Aelbrecht Bouts. These showed on their panels a beseeching Virgin, her hands folded in prayer, united in suffering to her martyred Son, depicted with a crown of thorns, with hands held in a similar gesture.¹⁵

fixion; fol. 88 – the Deposition and Intombment (possibly a conflation of two sorrows in one illustration); fol. 89 shows the Virgin Mary and all six (or seven) sorrows in succession. For the contents of BnF Colbert 1432 see *Catalogue des manuscrits français*, vol. i, p. 37.

¹² [Aurelius], *Die cronycke van Hollant*, fol. 204v.

¹³ Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 52.

¹⁴ Holweck, 'Feasts of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary' in: *TCE*, vol. xiv, pp. 151-152.

¹⁵ Schuler 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 15. The diptych examined by Schuler consists of the *Man of Sorrows* and *Mater dolorosa* from the studio of Dieric Bouts (National Gallery in London). For a detailed overview of Dutch art on this theme see *ibid.*, pp. 5-28.

The interaction between courtly milieus and cities represents an important context for understanding the reception of the devotion of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary and the circulation of its literary products in the late-medieval Netherlands. The court of Albrecht of Bavaria at The Hague in Holland, around the year 1400, is one such example of a setting where an early form of the devotion to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary was propagated in an atmosphere of Christian piety. At The Hague, worship of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary found a patron in Dirc van Delft (also Dirc van Delf; c. 1356-1404), who dedicated to it a part of his Catechism-like devotional treatise *Tafel van den Kersten Ghelove* ('Handbook of the Christian faith'). Dirc van Delft was a highly-educated man, and in his time probably the only Holland-born doctor of theology;¹⁶ his contribution to the cult of the Seven Sorrows in Holland, therefore, deserves close attention.¹⁷ Under the heading 'Van onser liever Vrouwen seven drofenis' Dirc van Delft dedicated a large section of the *Tafel*... to each of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary (Somerstuc, verses 843-953). In this he relied on *Speculum humanae salvationis*, *De septem tristitiis B.V. Mariae*, a theological treatise written probably c. 1324 in Strasbourg by the Dominican Ludolf von Sachsen.¹⁸ This book circulated in the Netherlands in a vernacular translation as *De spiegel der menscheliker behoudenesse*.¹⁹ Dirc van Delft prefaced his exposition of the Seven Sorrows, which ran parallel to the *Speculum* text, with an etymology of the Virgin Mary's name:

Die lieve moeder Gods Maria was meer dan op een stonde van haers liefs kints wegghen mit rouwen bevaen, want dat ghift haer naem Maria te verstaen, die beduut een bitter zee. Want die golven van veel lidens op ende neder in hare herten gronde dronghen mit menighen storme tijtlics ver-

¹⁶ Van Oostrom, *Het woord van eer*, p. 181.

¹⁷ Recent researchers who take the view that the devotion of the Seven Sorrows was a 'political' one, esp. Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin' or Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', omit to mention that the Dominican order in Holland and the court of Albrecht of Bavaria at The Hague helped to shape a favorable environment for variants of this devotion in the first decades of the 15th century. For this latter view see Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 251; Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 44.

¹⁸ Van Delf, *Tafel van den kersten ghelove* (ed. Daneels), vol. iii, p. 125, note to verses 843-934.

¹⁹ Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 44 and p. 323, n. 39. A study of the *Speculum humanae salvationis* is available by Wilson (A.), Wilson (J.), *A Medieval Mirror*.

driets. Als ic in seven manieren wil uutwisen, dair ic recht als een ghetide hairs lidens wil of scriven.²⁰

*The dear Mother of God, Mary, was more than once seized with anguish for reasons that had to do with her dear child, because that is the meaning of her name, Mary, which signifies 'bitter sea'. For the waves of much suffering intruded into her very heart bearing many storms of worldly sorrow. If I wanted to make those the seven ways clear, I would compare her suffering to the liturgy of the hours.*²¹

The events from the Gospels mentioned as the Sorrows of the Virgin Mary generally displayed much variation in sources dating from the 14th-15th century.²² The designated number of sorrows and their type became a topic of some controversy when the devotion of the Seven Sorrows arose in the southern Netherlands in 1492/3.²³ However, nearly a full century earlier, Dirc van Delft proposed the same number of sorrows (i.e. seven) that would later be adopted by the confraternity organized by Jan van Coudenberghe and his associates:

<i>Dirc van Delft:</i>	<i>Jan van Coudenberghe:</i> Als te weten dat ghy overdenckt met wat enen rou dese Heylighe Moeder bevangen is geweest...
1. <i>The Prophecy of Simeon</i>: 'Die eerste droefenisse ende herten rouwe, die si ont-fenc, gheschiede, doe si mit groter vrolicheden quam inden tempel ende woude horen Soon Gode offeren nader ewe'. 2. <i>The Massacre of the Innocents in Bethlehem and the Flight into Egypt</i>: 'Die ander rouwe was, doe die coninc Herodes dede zoeken hair kint, dat hi mitten swairde woude doden.'	1. <i>The Prophecy of Simeon</i>: ...als sy haren lieven sone Jesum in den Tempel opofferende / doort voorseggen van Simeon ghehoort heeft / dat het sweert der rouwen haer ziele soude doorsnijden. 2. <i>The Flight into Egypt</i>: Ende wederom als sy naer Aegypten de vlucht genomen heeft ende seven jaren als ballinck is ghebleven.

²⁰ Van Delf, *Tafel van den kersten ghelove* (ed. Daneels), vol. iii, p. 125.

²¹ An analogy to the Seven Sorrows: The liturgy of the hours contains seven offices. Cf. Van Delf, *op. cit.* (ed. Daneels), vol. iii, p. 125, note to verse 849.

²² Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', pp. 15-17.

²³ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, esp. pp. 199-200 and pp. 229-233.

3. <i>The Loss of Christ in Jerusalem</i>: 'Die derde rouwe was, doe hair lieve kint twalef iaer was out ende mit haer ten tempel van Iherusalem uut haer stat van Nazareth quam.' 4. <i>The Betrayal of Christ in the Garden of Olives</i>: 'Die vierde rouwe was, doe si nae hoors liefs kints avontmael in haer camer lach ende hoorde roepen ende segghen, dat Ihesus, hoor soon, vanden ioden wair mit wapen ende mit macht als een morde-naer ghevangen...' 5. <i>The Crucifixion of Christ</i>: 'Die vijfde rouwe was, doe si horen lieven Soon sach hanghen naect anden cruce ende hem niet en mochte decken; sach ghenaghelt strac sijn leden, ende sise niet en mochte slappen; hoorde dat hem dorstede, ende si hem niet en mochte een dropel waters langhen; sach dat sijn hooft henghe op sijn borst, ende sijs niet en mochte opheffen...' 6. <i>The Death and Deposition</i>: 'Die seste rouwe ende droeffenisse was, doe si hoors doots kindes lichaem soude vanden cruce in haren scoet ontfaen'. 7. <i>The Burial of Christ; Mary Wishes to be Buried Along with Her Son</i>: 'Die sevende droeffenis was, doe si vernam, dat Ioseph van Armathien tot haer quam ende woude horen lieven soon legghen in een graf, daer si begheerde mit hem besloten te werden'.¹	3. <i>The Loss of Christ in Jerusalem</i>: Wederom als sy dry geheele dagen / haren lieven sone verloren hebbende hem ghesocht heeft: 4. <i>The Encounter with Christ at the Via Crucis</i>: Item als sy den selven sijn Cruys / op sijn schouderen / naer den Bergh van Calvarien draghende / heeft ontmoet / 5. <i>The Crucifixion of Christ</i>: als sy hem ter selver plaetsen aent Cruys heeft sien naghelen / 6. <i>The Death of Christ</i>: de doot sterven / 7. <i>The Deposition and Burial of Christ</i>: ende afghedaen zijnde int graf heeft sien ligghen.²

Here, only minor differences can be detected with regard to how the events of the Gospels were assigned to each individual sorrow.²⁴ Other parallels can be found in the functionality of both texts. Dirc van Delft provided catechetical information on the Seven Sorrows, but he also in-

²⁴ The differences are even slighter when the Sorrows of the *Tafel* are compared to the verse that Jan van Coudenberghe arranged to have installed in the churches at Abbenbroek, Reimerswaal and Bruges. See Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratus (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 192-193. For the Latin and English text of the latter verse see Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 19 n. 54.

structed the reader in the actual practice of spiritual meditation. Learning on information taken from *Speculum humanae salvationis*, Dirc van Delft acknowledged that the devotee who meditated on the Sorrows of the Mother of God could enjoy special favors in times of great need:

Die innighe mensche hebben ghescreven, dat die lieve moeder Ihesu wil van haren seven droeffenissen bedacht wesen. Ende wie dat dat daghelix mit devocien doet, datsi hem te hulpe coemt in alre noot ende sonderlinge in dier uren sijnre doot. Ende voort scrivet men van veel oflaets, dat dair toebehoort.²⁵

Mystics have written that the dear Mother of Christ wishes her Seven Sorrows to be commemorated. And if one piously engages daily in this devotion, then to one's aid she will come in times of necessity, and especially in the hour of one's death. Finally, much is written [by other authors] about the pardons related to this [devotion].

When Jan van Coudenberghe and his associates started worshipping the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary in order to obtain divine assistance to call an end to a conflict that had spiralled out of control, their program of spiritual renewal was, therefore, not entirely without precedent. At the end of the 'Somerstuc' Dirc van Delft inserted a Middle-Dutch prayer to the Virgin Mary of the Seven Sorrows. This prayer, originally derived from the Latin *Speculum...*, is further proof that religious devotion to commemorate the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary was practised at The Hague around the year 1400. More importantly, Dirc van Delft was strongly committed to propagating this devotion, and its theme of empathy and consolation, in the courtly circles for which the *Tafel...* was primarily intended:

Als ic van enen heilighen broeder eens las, dat sijn bedinghe van onser liever Vrouwen aldus was.

Du alre barmhertichste coninghinne, moeder alre ghenaden ende vrouwe alre gueder herten, mijn guedertieren troosterinne, hoer mi mijn iammer claghen, ende com mi te hulpe in al mijn node, ende help mi mijn laster draghen, om den rouwe dijnre bedroeffenisse, die du hadste bi dinen leven, van dijns liefs kints weghe, daer ic di seven ghehuechnissen van wil gheven, opdat ic di, moeder, in al mijn liden bevoel mit troost bi mi te comen ende een onderstant alle mijns noots te wesen, doer die eer des swaerts des rouwen, dat doer dijn herte van mededoghen dijns kints passie wert ghesneden. Welcke minne-wonden, suete moeder, laet op mijn armoede bloeden ende al mijn leet daer in ghesachtet werden. Amen.²⁶

²⁵ Van Delf, *Tafel van den kersten ghelove* (ed. Daneels), vol. iii, p. 130.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Once I read about [or in the writings of] a certain holy friar that this is his prayer to our most Holy Virgin:

O most merciful queen, mother of all grace and lady of all good hearts, my gracious consolation, hark to my miserable complaints, and come to my aid in times of need, assisting me to carry my life's burdens, through a mournful meditation on your life's sorrows over your dear Son, which I will commemorate seven times, so that you may comfort me in my sorrow and support me in my need, owing to the sword of pain that pierced your compassionate heart at the time of the Passion of your Child. Dear Mother, let those wounds of love shed their blood on my poor condition and by these means may all my suffering be alleviated. Amen.

It has been convincingly argued that, in the mid-15th century, the *Tafel* found a 'secondary reception network' in the nunneries of Holland where Dirc van Delft's work functioned '[...] as an intermediary between learned theologians and their pious female public'.²⁷ A manuscript of the *Tafel* dating from c. 1470 (The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 70 H 30) was written for female readers at a convent in Leiden.²⁸ The religious ideas of Dirc van Delft percolated at a very early date from courtly circles into town-based religious communities. At the point when Van Coudenberghe proposed to establish a Confraternity of the Seven Sorrows there can be no doubt, therefore, that in south-west Holland similarly as elsewhere in the Netherlands '[...] both the theological and artistic basis of the new cult were already in place'.²⁹

2.3. COMPLEMENTARY DEVOTIONS: THE CULT OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST AND THE SEVEN SORROWS IN DELFT

In late-medieval Delft devotion to the dolours of the Virgin Mary was inseparably connected to the cult of the Passion of Christ. Delft was a city where a well-documented cult of the Passion of Christ focused on the worship of the Holy Cross (known as 'mitten hair') at St. Hippolyte's church, and Our Lady of Sorrow (*Onze lieve vrouw ter nood Gods*) at St. Ursula's. The existence of a reciprocal connection between the cult and the demand among devout lay and religious readers for publications on

²⁷ Van Oostrom et al., 'Dirc van Delft en zijn lezers', p. 61 (transl. mine – M.P.).

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 17.

the topic of Christ's suffering and the compassion of the Virgin Mary can be therefore easily imagined. Several examples can be given of how this devotion functioned in the religious-literary world of Delft. Most of these examples come from the period around 1490-1500 when a vast number of religious treatises were printed, many of which were dedicated to the life, suffering and Passion of Christ. In 1494 Christiaen Snellaert published a 'golden litany of the Passion of Christ' (*Gulden litanie vander passien Christi*). The suffering of Christ was specifically retold in Snellaert's edition of the anonymous *Liden ende die passie ons Heeren Jesu Christi* (1487, 1495). Another work that must have resounded with a religious audience in Delft were the *Centum meditationes passionem domini nostri Jhesu Christi ac compassionem beate Marie virginis exprimentes* by the Bl. Henry Suso (Seuse, Amandus, c. 1300-1366), a Dominican mystic from the Rhineland. A translation of Suso's treatise was published by Christiaen Snellaert under the Dutch title *De honderd artikelen van der passien ons Heeren Jhesu Christi* (1494-1495?). The readers of Suso's hundred articles were instructed to divide their meditations over the seven days of the week. This highly popular work can serve as an example of how Marian devotion, with a special focus on the Virgin's compassion, was prominently present in the context of the suffering of Christ, so that these were practically inseparable in the religious experience of the devotees:

Hier eynden c articulen of ghedenckenissen vanden waerden heiligen liden ons heren Jhesu Christi ende des onmeteliken rouwen der alre suetster maghet Marien, sijne ghebenedider moeder. Ende wie dese voirscreven articulen alle daghe niet overlesen en can, die machse deylen an stucken ende lesense eens ter weken over mit ynnicheyt sijns herten, so hi best can ende hem onse lieve here verleent.³⁰

This is the end of the hundred articles or recollections of the worthy holy suffering of our lord Jesus Christ and the immeasurable suffering of the most gentle Virgin Mary, His blessed mother [emphasis mine – M.P.]. And who cannot read these articles every day, may divide them in smaller parts and read them all in a single week with particular dedication of his heart, to the best of his abilities, with the grace of our Lord.

Such a formula ending the 'hundred meditations' was most common in manuscripts in the 'North-Netherlandish textual variant' (*Noord-Neder-*

³⁰ Cited after Aelst, *Vruchten van de passie*, p. 56. For Suso's *Centum meditationes* see also Deschamps, 'De Middelnederlandse vertalingen en bewerkingen van de Hunderd Betrachtungen und Begehungen van Hendricus Suso', pp. 309-369.

landse bewerking) from Delft (including the oldest one from 1420), which suggests that such an ending had been probably added by copyists in that city.³¹ Amendments such as this one demonstrate that by the mid-15th century in Delft there was already a continuing tradition of devotion based on Suso's hundred articles of the Passion. The experience of the devotees and their spiritual advisors, for instance, led to practical recommendations being made concerning the manner in which the meditational practices could be better adapted to the readers' daily routine. Most importantly, however, in the tradition of the faithful the meditation on the Passion of Christ naturally converged with a recapitulation of the sorrows of the Virgin Mary.

Some of the publications on the Passion of Christ were lavishly illustrated to allow the devotee to better visualize the subject of the meditation. One such publication was *Fasciculus mirre* published in Delft on 6 March 1517 for Hugo Jansz van Woerden.³² This handbook on the life, and most especially, Passion of Christ, contained a series of detailed etchings by the so-called Master of Delbecq-Schreiber.³³ The book's author was an anonymous Franciscan from Cologne, but the vernacular compilation was re-edited by a friar of the same order living in Antwerp, Matthijs Wentsen (d. 1543). This book was frequently re-published: a second edition came out at Antwerp on 18 January 1518 at the press of Hendrick Eckert van Homberch, who had moved to that city from Delft around the year 1500.³⁴ A collection of devotional illustrations, but in contrast to the former, lacking illustrations except for the title leaf, was *Een cransken van minnen*, printed by Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder for Michiel Hillen van Hoochstraten of Antwerp. This book illustrates the contacts that existed between printers from the southern Netherlands and their colleagues in the north, although it was very seldom that books

³¹ Aelst, *Vruchten van de passie*, p. 56.

³² anon., *Fasciculus mirre*, Delft: Hugo Jansz van Woerden, 6 March 1517 (NK 922), The Hague Koninklijke Bibliotheek 226 E 5. Van Woerden was active in Leiden (until c. 1517) and The Hague; he set up workshops in other towns, including Delft, but he did not take up residence there; see Van der Lof, 'Boekdrukkers en hun werk', in: *Het boek in Nederland in de 16^e eeuw*, p. 13 and p. 66.

³³ Cf. Cockx-Indestege, 'De Passie Delbecq-Schreiber houtsneden in drukken', pp. 245-278.

³⁴ See no. 25 'Fasciculus mirre', *Het boek in Nederland in de 16^e eeuw*, p. 67. A vernacular version of this treatise in manuscript, 'Dat bondeken van myrhen', is preserved at The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 135 G 20. For this manuscript, originating from the monastery of Onze Lieve Vrouwenhage at Helmond, c. 1529; see *op. cit.*, no. 8, p. 58-59.

were printed in Holland for a south-Netherlandish clientèle – mostly it was the other way round. This simple but elegantly-published devotional treatise is another fact that illustrates how the networks of printers and readers of religious literature in the Netherlands collaborated regardless of the obstacles of geographical distance.³⁵

Publications on Marian themes, though more rare, also spread the devotion to the Virgin Mary, often focalizing the Passion through Mary's eyes, as in the 12th century pseudo-Bernard *Tractatus in laudibus sanctae Dei genitricis*.³⁶ A Marian pseudo-Bernard text printed in Delft was the *Croon onser liever vrouwen* (Christiaen Snellaert, 1490) which contained devotional meditations on the life of the Virgin Mary.

Such devotional books in the vernacular, however, were not the only type of publication through which religious themes, including the cult of the Virgin Mary, reached readers in Holland and Delft. In the context of the same spirituality of the Passion of Christ (and the related cult of the dolorous compassion of the Virgin Mary, which arose in Delft at the turn of the 15th and 16th century through religious manuals such as Henry Suso's *De honderd artikelen van der passien ons Heeren Jhesu Christi*) one can place the popular chapbook *Begijntje van Parijs* ('The beguine of Paris') published by Christiaen Snellaert under the title *baghy[n]ken van parrys* between 1493 and 1495.³⁷ The *Begijntje van Parijs* was a rhymed narrative poem in dialogue form which, by its metrical qualities and somewhat repetitive phrasing, resembled the late-medieval song 'Het daghet inden Oosten' (see below, **Chapter 6.6**). It told the story of the unfolding religious calling of a young woman, the 'beguine of Paris' of the title, whose mother sought unsuccessfully to dissuade her from entering the beguineage. The narrative followed each of the seven days that the newly-admitted beguine spent at the beguineage while contemplating Christ's life. The meditation ended in a spiritual vision of Christ as the bridegroom, during which the 'beguine of Paris', as the spiritual bride, once again professed her utmost humility. At the end of the story the mother superior disclosed that the mystical contemplation experienced by the heroine had actually lasted seven years. This absence from daily tasks, however, was

³⁵ *Een cransken van minnen*, Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder for Michiel Hilten van Hoochstraten at Antwerp, 1518 (NK 640). See no. 38, *Het boek in Nederland in de 16^e eeuw*, pp. 71-72.

³⁶ Barré, 'Le "Planctus Mariae"', pp. 243-266; Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 9.

³⁷ Campbell, *Annales*, no. 215; *Gesamtkatalog der Wiegendrucke*, vol. iii, p. 593, no. 3765. A bibliography is provided in *Dat baghijnken van Parijs* (ed. de Vooy, Kruyskamp), pp. 29-31.

amply compensated by the spiritual unity with Christ and the salvific vision that the 'beguine of Paris' achieved through her meditation.³⁸

The seven days that the beguine spent in the beguinage come across as a dramatized re-enactment of the 'hundred meditations' of Henry Suso distributed (according to the Delft model) over all the days of the week. The theme, like in Suso's handbook, was the suffering of Christ. The contemplation on Friday and Saturday (exploring the events of the first two days of the Paschal *Triduum*) therefore saw the beguine meditating on the stark material reality of the Passion of the Savior and, simultaneously, on the anguish of suffering experienced by the Virgin Mary:

In vrydaghe moet ick alden dach
Al onder den cruce staen,
Daer mijn alder liefste lief
Aen hinc soe wyde ontdaen.

Met minnender herten bleef hij doot,
Ende met sachten moede.
Die liefste moeder sijn
Worde nat van synen bloede.³⁹

On Friday I must stand all day long under the cross, where my love was crucified. He died with a gentle and loving heart. His dearest Mother was doused in His blood.

The beguine's recapitulation of the events of Good Friday explicitly mentioned the presence of the Virgin Mary at the hour of Christ's death and during the deposition.⁴⁰ The following meditation for Saturday reflected on the need to participate inwardly in the grief of those mourning the death of Christ, most especially His Mother:

In saterdaghe moet ick alden dach
Harde onledich wesen,
Of ick die lieve moeder sijn
Setten mocht in vreden.

³⁸ Unlike in the middle-Dutch Marian legend of *Beatrijs*, here the 'absence' of the beguine has no additional negative moral significance. The function of the narrative is not a moralizing one but rather a description of what happens to a female mystic who, consistently turning away from worldly reality (which may be a distraction even within a beguinage or nunnery), embarks on the spiritual path of *Imitatio Christi* in an intense compassionate meditation on the Passion of Christ.

³⁹ *Dat baghynken van Parijs* (ed. de Vooy, Kruyskamp), p. 19, vs. 278-285.

⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 20, vs. 302-305.

Mocht ic haer helpen draghen
 Den iammerlyken rouwe
 Die sy int herte draghet,
 Die alder liefste vrouwe!⁴¹

On Saturday I must do my utmost best to console His dear Mother; I wish I could help Her to carry the painful grief which that dearest Lady carries in Her heart!

After the deposition and burial of Christ the sorrow of the Virgin Mary became the sole object of the beguine's compassionate empathy. Assisting the Virgin Mary by compassionately sharing in her grief was propagated as a true realization of *Imitatio Christi* by Ludolf von Sachsen, the author of the popular late-medieval 'life of Christ' that – estimating by the book inventory of St. Barbara's cloister – was widely read in Delft. In the *Vita Christi* of Ludolf von Sachsen devotees were encouraged to '[...] reflect how great was the sympathizing grief of the Son for the Mother suffering with Him [...] if we wish in this point to conform ourselves as far as possible to Christ, let us compassionate also His sorrowing mother, for He also compassioned her.'⁴²

Various forms of devotion in the late-medieval Netherlands comprised a spiritual re-living of the Passion of Christ in every detail. In this respect, the devotion of the Passion stimulated and was, in turn, stimulated by detailed accounts of pilgrimages to the Holy Land. The authors of these accounts set about describing the exact route of the *Via Crucis*, which could then be re-created in personal meditation. One publication, in which the distances of the *Via Crucis* were measured out for the benefit of those unable to go to the Holy Land but willing to undertake a personal spiritual meditation on the martyrdom of Christ, was the *Devote meditatie op die passie ons liefs Heeren*. This treatise, the work of the priest 'Bethlem' (probably a pseudonym) came out in many Netherlandish cities during the second decade of the 16th century (the first edition is from Antwerp, 1510).⁴³ A colored woodcut on the title leaf of one of these editions (Antwerp: Willem Vorsterman, Oct. 12, 1518) shows a grieving Virgin kneeling next to the Cross. By applying red rubrication to the etching the artist suggestively showed blood

⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 20-21, vs. 314-321.

⁴² Ludolf von Sachsen, *The Hours of the Passion* (ed. Coleridge), p. 317. This quotation is cited directly after Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 13. For a detailed study of the *Vita Christi* see Conway, *The Vita Christi of Ludolph of Saxony*.

⁴³ Van Herwaarden, *Between Saint James and Erasmus*, p. 72.

gushing from Mary's heart.⁴⁴ An edition of this treatise was published in Delft by Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder in 1520.⁴⁵ Real pilgrimages to the site of the Passion, not just mental and spiritual ones, were undertaken as well. A Delft barber, one Arent Willemszoon, visited the Holy Land in 1525.⁴⁶ He journeyed together with Jan Govertszoen (Johannes de Gorcum), priest at the church of St. Hippolyte's, who left an account of this voyage.⁴⁷ However, the most prominent Delft author who made the study of the Passion of Christ and the *Via Crucis* his speciality was Christiaan van Adrichem (Adrichemius, Crucius, 1533-1585), priest and confessor from 1565 of the convent of St. Barbara at Delft. There, in his native city, and in exile in Cologne from 1572, Van Adrichem wrote a topographic description of Jerusalem with an account of the route that Christ followed during the Passion.⁴⁸

Van Adrichem's publication was a bridge between the late-medieval Passion devotion in Delft and the territories of learning and piety explored by the writers of the post-Tridentine Catholic humanism. A similar bridge between the worlds of medieval civic devotion and Renaissance vernacular humanism in Delft can be found in one of the sermons of Adam Sasbout, where listeners were attended to the familiar theme of the compassion of the Virgin Mary (1569). Adam Sasbout was a Delft-born Franciscan who spent most of his active life teaching theology at Louvain. The sermons, originally delivered to the students at Louvain, were published on the initiative of Sasbout's nephew Michael Vosmeer, and carried, in the Dutch translation, a word of introduction written by the Delft burgomaster Jan Sasbout.⁴⁹ In a sermon for the Feast of the As-

⁴⁴ Bethlem, *Devote meditatie op die passie ons liefs Heeren*, Antwerp: Willem Vorsterman, Oct. 12, 1518 (NK 315).

⁴⁵ Bethlem, *Een devote meditatie op die passie ons liefs Heeren*, Delft: C.H Lettersnijder, 1520 (NK 316).

⁴⁶ Van Herwaarden, *Between Saint James and Erasmus*, p. 79.

⁴⁷ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 141, p. 199 (n. 234). The manuscript is preserved as Göttingen Codex Mss. hist. nr 823.

⁴⁸ Hensen, 'Adrichem (Christiaan van)' in: *NNBW*, vol. iii, 5-7; Christiaan van Adrichem, *Urbis Hierosolymae quemadmodum ea Christi tempore floruit, et suburbanorum eius brevis descriptio. De locis item quae Iesu Christi et Sanctorum Passione ac gestis nobilitata sunt, aliarumque insigniorum historiarum brevis Commentarius Omnibus Christianis lectu utilis, sacrae vero Scripturae interpretibus necessarius*, Arnold Mylius: Cologne 1585; A modern edition (with translation) of the *Via Crucis* by Van Adrichem is to be found in Van Herwaarden, *Between Saint James and Erasmus*, pp. 81-85.

⁴⁹ Sasbout, Adam, *Devote ende seer gheestelijcke Sermo[n]en inden Latijn eerstmael gehadt ende vercondicht voor den gheleerden ende studenten der uniuersiteyt van Loeuen*

sumption (August 15), Sasbout explained why the Virgin Mary, standing under the cross, should be regarded as a perfect example of steadfastness and spiritual love. Mary's love of Christ far exceeded the imperfect love shown by the Apostles and, as Sasbout argued (with a reference to one of the Sorrows), it was also superior to the later sacrifice of the holy martyrs:

[...] Mer in dese die wi prijsen / en heeft die liefde noch oueruallen noch wtghedaen / Ja noch gheturbeert moghen worden, Die Apostelen ghinghen lopen / dese alleen is niet wech ghelopen / sy worden ghesandalizeert / dese en wort niet gescandalizeert: sy verlieten den Heer / dese en heeft hem niet verlaten / tot aenden cruys volcht si / inden doot blijft si by hem / bereyt oock met hem te steruen. [...] Want [...] dese heeft haer siele (die gheen corrupci noch verganckelicheyte) te weten ghegeuen om doorslagen te werden voor die liefde haers beminde. Want in haer is vervult gheweest die prophecie des rechveerdighen Simeons / seggende, 'Ende u eyghen siele sal doorgaen het sweert'.⁵⁰

[...] *But in her whom we praise [i.e. the Virgin Mary] this love never diminished nor was it ever extinguished. It was not even perturbed, for when the Apostles fled [in the Garden of Olives] she did not flee, they were scandalized, she was not scandalized; they abandoned the Lord, she did not abandon Him, but followed him to the cross, remaining with Him in His hour of death, prepared to die with him as well. [...] Because [...] she offered up her soul (which is free of corruption or mutability) to be wounded for the sake of her beloved. Because in her the prophecy of the righteous Simeon has been fulfilled: 'And your own soul shall be pierced by the sword'.*

In the pictorial art created in Delft during the 16th century we can mention a notable example of the Passion theme and the sorrows of the Virgin in a triptych, with scenes from the Crucifixion of Christ, by the Master of Delft painted around the year 1510.⁵¹ This altar-piece, perhaps created for the Premonstrant monastery of Koningsveld, near Delft, projected the events of the Passion onto the topography of the city. A view of Delft, including the tower of the Church of St. Ursula (and possibly the medieval town hall) was situated in the left-hand corner of the background of the crucifixion scene, just next to the body of the thief Dismas, and directly above the weeping Virgin Mary. A different painting

[...] Gheprent tot Leyden by my Jan Mathijszoon / woonende op sinte Pancratius Kerckgraft. Anno 1569.

⁵⁰ Sasbout, *op. cit.*, fol. 188v-189r.

⁵¹ Master of Delft, 'Triptych: Scenes from the Crucifixion of Christ', National Gallery, London NG2922.1.

of the sorrowful Virgin Mary consoled by St. John, also attributed to the Master of Delft, once part of a larger altar-piece depicting the Passion, is now in the Rijksmuseum.⁵² Also on the same theme, the crucifixion and the sorrow of the Virgin Mary, was one of a series of devotional prints by the Master of the Delbecq-Schreiber Passion (similar prints were used to illustrate the *Fasciculus Mirre*).⁵³ The prominence in Delft of the sorrows and the Passion as themes of sixteenth-century art can hardly be called coincidental when we witness the ubiquitous presence of this type of devotion. A fine though late example is the altar-piece produced in 1566 (the year of the iconoclastic riots) by the renaissance painter Maerten van Heemskerck (1498-1574) who, as some historians suggest, was possibly at this date no longer an orthodox Catholic.⁵⁴ Be that as it may, Heemskerck's splendid painting presented the traditional sacred theme of Christ's body laid to burial by a grieving Mary in the company of the apostle John, St. Mary Magdalen, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, with the Calvary visible in the background. This devotional piece was most likely ordered by Cornelius Musius (1500/3?-1572), priest, humanist, Neo-Latin poet and rector of the Delft convent of St. Agatha, who probably composed the Latin text inscribed on a banderole surrounding the original frame of the painting.⁵⁵

The devotion to the Seven Sorrows, and its literature, cannot be seen as entirely distinct from the contemplation of the Passion. Even after the Confraternity of the Seven Sorrows was instituted by the circle around Jan van Coudenberghe in 1492/3, contemporaries tended to fuse both of these types of worship in their religious experience. That the contemplation in Delft of the Seven Sorrows easily blended in the minds of devotees with the devotion of the Passion of Christ emerges from the correspondence that Dirck Adamszoon van der Burch sent to Jan van Coudenberghe. In one of his letters, dated 20 May 1506, the Delft priest stated:

⁵² Master of Delft, 'Mary and John crying next to the body of Christ', Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, SK-A-3325.

⁵³ Master of the Delbecq-Schreiber Passion [also attributed to the Master of Delft and the Master of the Virgo inter Virgines], 'Christ on the cross', Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, RP-P-OB-2003.

⁵⁴ See e.g. Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 98.

⁵⁵ Maerten van Heemskerck, 'Bewening van Christus', Stedelijk Museum Het Prinsenhof Delft PDS 36. A detailed art-historical analysis of this painting is to be found in Lokin, *Maarten van Heemskerck*. This painting was saved from the *beeldenstorm* and displayed during the 17th century in the town hall of Delft, Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 125. A Calvary triptich by Van Heemskerck is in the collection of the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia.

[...] Iae met met recht mach deze instellinghe oft de contemplatie der seven Weedommen der Maghet Maria ghenoept worden de onscheyndelijke, want sy de Alderheylichste is, ende soo nakende, iae by geknocht aen de Passie ons Heeren Iesu Christi, dat niemant de contemplatie der seven Weedommen der Maghet Maria en can gedoen, hy en moet mede contempleren de Passie ons Heeren.⁵⁶

[...] Truly, this institution, or [in other words] the contemplation of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary may be called immaculate, because it is the most holy, and approaching so closely, or indeed tied up with the Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ that no-one can contemplate the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary without contemplating the Passion of our Lord [emphasis mine – M.P.].

The belief that the devotion of the Seven Sorrows was, in principle, complementary to a devotion of the Passion, and indeed was unimaginable without the latter, was not only a sentiment heard in Delft (and, as no reply is given, one may assume that it was tacitly acknowledged as true by the confraternity's founder, Jan van Coudenberghe). Such was also the practice during official celebrations held by the Confraternity in Delft on the occasion of the visit of Margaret of Austria. At the time of the autumn feast-day commemorating the miracles of the Seven Sorrows (actually celebrated over a period of thirteen days) special homilies were delivered in Delft churches about 'the Passion of Christ, the compassion of the Virgin Mary and miracles' ('vande Passie Christi, ende vant medelijden der Maghet, ende vande Miraculen').⁵⁷

The conviction that the Seven Sorrows devotion was never far from the Christocentric Passion was also echoed by other correspondents of Jan van Coudenberghe. One of them was the young priest Michiel de Zanda, licenciate in canon law and pastor in Haamstede (Zeeland), who provided a realistic and detailed account of his personal thoughts on this worship, to which he had grown attached while studying theology at Cologne. The object of this inward meditation was to re-live 'in one's own self' the very same emotions that both '*Christ and His sorrowful Mother* had experienced' [it. mine – M.P.] ('men gevoelt oock in zijn selven, t'ghene dat Christus Iesus, ende sijne weemoedighe Moeder ghevoelt hebben').⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Weeen*, p. 46.

⁵⁷ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 156.

⁵⁸ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22.

None of this would have surprised Jan van Coudenberghe, for whom the Seven Sorrows devotion was not only about the Virgin Mary but, just as importantly, about the Passion of Christ. He stated this rule very explicitly when reacting to the critics who rejected the devotion to the Seven Sorrows:

Doch onder dese gheveynsde heylichey / schuyldede bedectelijck eene schandelijcke booshey: want aenghesien dat de Maechdelijcke droefheden / sonder ghedurighe bedenckinge des lijdens ons Heeren Jesu Christi niet en connen overleyt worden / soo ghebeurdent dat de ghedenckenisse haerder droefheden gheweirt zijnde / oock wech ghenomen soude sijn wt de Herten der Christghelooovighen / de alder-vruchtbarichste memorie der wonden ons Heeren Jesu Christi.⁵⁹

Yet this hypocrisy [i.e. arguments of the opponents of the devotion] concealed a scandalous evil, because (knowing that the sorrows of the Virgin cannot be contemplated without at the same time meditating on the suffering of Our Lord Jesus Christ), were the meditation on her sorrows to be rejected, then the most beneficial commemoration of the wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ would be removed from the hearts of Christians [emphasis mine – M.P.].

An identical practice of conflating the Seven Sorrows devotion with meditation on Passion as the one described by Jan van Coudenberghe, Dirck Adamszoon and other priests was reflected in the experience of the lay faithful, who logically considered the Seven Sorrows devotion to be the next step in the already familiar contemplative worship of the Passion. The manifestations of the piety of lay devotees and the miracles that they experienced was recorded with the full consent of the Church authorities in the official registers of the miracles. Petronelle (age forty-eight), born at The Hague, was the wife of one Strevel, a clothes-washer. Returning from the Rotterdam fair in August, 1511, she fell off the cart and badly wounded, she was given up for dead. Her husband immediately prayed to St. Jacob, promising to make a pilgrimage to Compostela. However, a stranger advised him to turn his thoughts in devout prayer, in equal measure, to ‘the Passion of Christ and the sorrows of His Mother’ (‘de passie Christi / ende sijnder Moeder weedommen’), whereupon Petronelle was miraculously restored to life.⁶⁰

Seeing how widespread the practice of conflating the devotion of the Sorrows with the cult of the Passion was in Delft, but also in other places in the Netherlands, it is not at all surprising that the Delft printers

⁵⁹ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 218.

⁶⁰ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 132.

brought out devotional handbooks that satisfied this combined demand. The first manuals on the devotion of the Seven Sorrows printed by Christiaen Snellaert at Delft were only slightly modified copies of the ones produced since 1492 by Gerard Leeu at Antwerp and at the house of the Brethren of the Common Life (the Collaciebroeders) in Gouda.⁶¹ However, around 1501 Hendrik Eckert van Homberch (who had moved meanwhile from Delft to Antwerp) introduced new themes into his handbook in the form of nine prayers to Christ derived from the Mass of Gregory the Great.⁶² Such a combination was by no means unusual, for it corresponded to widely-shared expectations among the readers-devotees.⁶³ The devotional prints in Delft, for which an order had been placed in 1507 by the wardens (*kerkmeesters*) of St. Hippolyte's church, advertised the devotion of the Passion in conjunction with the Seven Sorrows even as they referred to the miracles that happened in the city ('Eert Jezus Passie ende die ween van Marien / doir Welck te Delf veel miraculen gheschien').⁶⁴ These prints, produced in what were then vast quantities (at least 2650 copies of all versions between 1507 and 1514),⁶⁵ must have been authorized by the Delft patrons of the devotion.

Meanwhile, almost after ten years had elapsed after the publication of the previous booklet, in the first decade of the 16th century two new handbooks appeared in Delft. These booklets were specifically designed for pious readers who combined the worship of the Passion with the devotion of the Seven Sorrows. One of these was *Seven Getijden der passien ons heren met die seven weden onser vrouwen* published by Henric Pie-

⁶¹ *Vanden seuen droefheden ofte weden onser lieuen vrouwen*, Delft: [Christiaen Snellaert or Hendrik Eckert van Homberch], 16 March 1497 (ILC 891).

⁶² *Dit is die ghelikenisse vanden beelde van onser lieuen vrouwen ende haren lieuen kinde...* Antwerp: Hendrik Eckert van Homberch, [c. 1501] (NK 4263).

⁶³ According to Speakman Sutch and Van Bruaene the fact that Eckert inserted into his booklet a sequence of prayers addressed to Christ was an 'unusual departure from the tradition now established of illustrated handbooks devoted to the Seven Sorrows' ('The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', p. 260). However, the printer's strategy would not have achieved success had he not taken into account the actual practices of the pious individuals engaged in the devotion, and for these individuals, as we have shown, a meditation on the Sorrows only naturally merged with contemplation of Christ's life and Passion.

⁶⁴ Rijksprentenkabinet Amsterdam, inv. no. O.B. 2123. Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish Etchings*, vol. xii, p. 65 no. 1. The same text was repeated in an otherwise modified print dating from 1511 by the 'Master II with the death's head', Rijksprentenkabinet Amsterdam, inv. no. O.B. 2124; Hollstein, *ibid.*, no. 2.

⁶⁵ Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, pp. 47-48. Delft, Gemeentearchief, Archief kerkmeesters vóór 1572, inv. no. 29, pp. 294-297.

tersz Lettersnijder on 12 December 1510.⁶⁶ The other booklet, an undated one, had been brought out by Cornelis Cornelissen under the title *Ghetijden der passien ons heren Ihesu Christi ende der seven weeden Marien*.⁶⁷ As with the devotional prints, there is every reason to believe that the combination of the Passion and Sorrows devotion had the full backing of Jan van Coudenberghe and the ecclesiastic authorities overseeing the confraternity. The first printing run in 1506/1507 commenced immediately after the cult in Delft had been officially approved and the miracles declared legitimate by Utrecht bishop Frederic of Baden in May, 1506.⁶⁸ The corresponding devotional practices, therefore, would have also had the approval of the higher clergy supervising the cult in the diocese of Utrecht.

2.4. WAS THE DEVOTION OF THE SEVEN SORROWS A 'POLITICAL CONFESSION'?

Jan van Coudenberghe (d. 1521), the founder of the devotion of the Seven Sorrows in the Netherlands at the turning-point between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, was secretary to Philip I. The presence of a priest-

⁶⁶ *Seven Getijden der passien ons heren met die seven weden onser vrouwen*, Delft: Henric Pietersz Lettersnijder, 12 December 1510 (NK 1002). See no. 35, 'Seven getijden der passien ons heren met die seven weden onser vrouwen', *Het boek in Nederland in de 16^e eeuw*, p. 71. On the woodcut illustrations to Lettersnijder's edition, which were re-used in other devotional books, see *ibid.*, Van Boheemen, 'De vorm van het gedrukte boek', p. 40 and p. 45.

⁶⁷ *Ghetijden der passien ons heren Ihesu Christi ende der seven weeden Marien*, Delft: [Cornelis Cornelissen, early 16th century] (NK 4234). For a bibliography of this post-incunable (not mentioned in STCN), see Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', p. 261.

⁶⁸ During the period 1507-1514, when the devotional prints linking the theme of the Passion and Sorrows were produced, the Delft priest Dirck Adamszoon corresponded on a regular basis with Jan van Coudenberghe. In view of a lack of evidence to the contrary one can reasonably assume that Jan van Coudenberghe did not regard the Delft devotion, where the Seven Sorrows merged with the contemplation of the Passion, as in any way different from what he had intended. For the visit of Frederic of Baden, bishop of Utrecht, see Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 60. A letter by Dirck Adamszoon van der Burch to Jan van Coudenberghe (20 May 1506) relating Frederic of Baden's visit, with an enclosed document by the bishop confirming the miracles as authentic, is in Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratijs (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Weeden*, pp. 45-50.

courtier at the center of the devotion is often presented as proof that the Burgundian court was directly involved in instituting the devotion. Often overlooked, however, is the fact that Jan van Coudenberghe, as the son of Arnold van Coudenberghe and *jonkvrouw* Margareta, daughter of Simon Macfer, belonged to one of the seven ruling families of Brussels.⁶⁹ Through his family ties Van Coudenberghe represented therefore not only the court but, in an even more profound way, shared many of the ideas, cultural values and social aspirations of the urban elites of the Netherlands. It is no less important, as a matter of fact, to see the figure of Jan van Coudenberghe in a new light: as a priest who socially belonged to the Netherlandish urban elite, and whose religious writings resounded with notions derived from the civic literature of the Netherlands. This atmosphere of civic values and town literature will also be essential for understanding the transmission of the devotion at Delft through the literary networks created by Jan van Coudenberghe and (among others) Dirck Adamsz van der Burch.⁷⁰ It was by resorting to the common Christian-Aristotelian ideas on the nature of civil society which circulated in the literary universe of the Netherlandish urban elites that Jan van Coudenberghe persuaded his supporters of the need for the formation and continued existence of the Confraternity of the Seven Sorrows.

Much has been made in recent scholarship of the supposedly 'political' agenda of the devotion of the Seven Sorrows. Jan van Coudenberghe and his lay and secular devotees are widely believed to have represented an identical 'political' outlook on the aims and purposes of the devotion as the Habsburg-Burgundian rulers of the Netherlands. Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure van Bruaene have argued that 'The confraternity of the Seven Sorrows brought [the] devotional technique of *compassio* from the heavenly to the political realm', citing in support of their assertion a portion of a privilege issued in 1511 by Maximilian of Austria and Charles (the future Charles V) to the Brussels chapter of the confraternity, in which, however, only passing mention is made of the Seven Sorrows.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Fruytier, 'Coudenberghe (Jan de)' in: *NNBW*, vol. vii, pp. 333-334.

⁷⁰ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Weeen* contains six letters by Dirck Adamsz van der Burch to Jan van Coudenberghe and other protectors of the devotion (pp. 45-70, 84-119 [two letters]; 129-150; 154-179 [two letters]).

⁷¹ *Liber authenticus*, fol. 29r, cited by Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', p. 263.

No detailed study, by contrast, has yet been made of the arguments used by Jan van Coudenberghe to explain the rationale for the confraternity. Below, such a closer investigation of Jan van Coudenberghe's *Ortus, progressus et impedimenta...* (a book written in response to Charles V's request for a history of the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows) will be presented. It reveals that where Charles V took a somewhat one-sided view of the devotional activities of the confraternity as a community praying exclusively for the sovereign and for the advancement of his dynasty, Jan van Coudenberghe, the representative of the Church who, at the same time, was a high-placed representative of the Netherlandish civic elites held a radically different opinion, and in fact even corrected the monarch's misapprehensions in this regard.

Van Coudenberghe's *Ortus, progressus et impedimenta* was essentially a dialogue in letters between Charles V's 'dynastic' view of the devotion (a letter dated 31 January 1518)⁷² and the theologically universal view advanced by the devotion's religious promoters.⁷³ Specifically, some passages of the *Ortus, progressus et impedimenta...*, especially Van Coudenberghe's reply to the king's words, can be interpreted as a Christian manual for rulers in the type of *Speculum* literature. In the Netherlands, however, such manuals, often written by representatives of the urban elites, were never simply intended for the ruler alone, but always engaged the princely reader in a dialogue with his subjects in the third estate. Van Coudenberghe's *Ortus, progressus et impedimenta...* was no different, for as it will be shown, its author resorted in it to the literary conventions of Netherlandish civic *parenesis* to correct the point of view imposed by the king in order to propagate that of the Church.

As a young man Charles V was open about the fact that he envisaged the literature about the devotion as an instrument to achieving a purely 'profane' goal, namely securing the place of his dynasty in the minds of his subjects. The model prescribed by the monarch in his letter to Van Coudenberghe was such that the devotion and its literary products were to function, explicitly, as a dynastic *lieu de memoire*:

Aengesien dat wy ende onsen broeder ende onse susters / geensins af wijckende van onser Vaders sporen / ende vande God[s]diensticheyt / begeerich zijn om dese Broederschap meerder aensienicheyt te gheven / ende inde selve onse namen te laeten inschrijven / ende op dat onsen naem ende voor al ons Vaders naem int voorseyde gheselschap / ende inde herten der Mede-

⁷² Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, pp. 183-186.

⁷³ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 187 [misprinted].

broederen / eewelijck leven mochten / ende op dat onse naercomers dit hebben moghen tot een eewige ghedencknisse / soo vermanen wij u seer: dat ghy in een corpus ende boeck by een stelt / alle t'ghene by u is / dese broederschap aengaende [...] ⁷⁴

Because we and our brothers and sisters, in no way departing either from our father's [i.e. Philip I's] footsteps or from religious piety, desire to give this Confraternity more splendor, and to have our names enrolled in it, so that our name, and most especially our father's name might live forever in the said confraternity and in the hearts of fellow brothers, and so that our heirs might receive this as a perpetual memento, therefore we command you with all our might [i.e. Jan van Coudenberghe] to record in a book or books every information you might have pertaining to this confraternity [...]

Van Coudenberghe did not accept unquestioningly the views advanced by the juvenile Charles V, even though the latter was a Christian sovereign and the former but a royal secretary. Van Coudenberghe's rhetorical strategy was to write his letter to the young monarch as an educational exercise (education or 'onderwysinge' is mentioned several times in the text), discretely confronting Charles V on the question of the underlying motivations of his religious conviction. In the opening passages of his letter, the cleric expressed his perplexity at the monarch's expressions of religious zeal. In reality, Van Coudenberghe sought to establish true devotion to the cause of Christianity as understood by the Church (instead of a self-serving dedication to the cause of the dynasty) as the authentic motive of the monarch's involvement in the cause of the confraternity:

Want wie en soude hem niet verwonderen, siende in dese uwe noch so teer oude, soo grooten wackerheyt toesicht ende sorghe der Heyligher dinghen? Indien dit soo diep in u herte gheprint is, ghelijck uwe Coninckijcke brieven uytgeven: de onderwysinge uwer ioncheyt sal seer goet sijn, niet sonder Gods voorsichticheyt ende hulpe, tot groote vooringe der gheheelder Christene Religie ende gemeynte [...] ⁷⁵

Who would not be amazed, seeing in your youthful age, such tremendous dedication to the cause of religion? If this is indeed so deeply imprinted in Your Majesty's heart as your letters make it out to be, then the education you obtained in your youth will be very beneficial, not without God's protection and help, to the advancement of the entire Christian religion and community [...] [emphasis mine – M.P.]

⁷⁴ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 183-184.

⁷⁵ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 186.

No mention was made of the advancement of the dynasty, for everything was subordinated to the spread of Christianity and to the well-being of a Christian society. Because the monarch was to be the main agent of this mission, further on in the same letter Van Coudenberghe mentioned several traits that Charles V should display as a sovereign. While attention was paid, as a matter of convention, to proper dynastic descent ('die van de meeste Coningen van alle canten ende Keyseren, sijn afcomste heeft'), by far the most weight was given to religious piety as a force shaping the king's life and actions. Most significantly, true dedication to the cause of Christianity meant that the monarch acted always with the utmost deference to the authority of the Church ('het beghinsel zijns rijcx begint vanden dienst Gods'). The policies of the state (and therefore of the dynasty) were to be built on the cornerstone of religious principles, not *vice versa*. For Jan van Coudenberghe that was the true essence of the education of a Christian monarch: the king, in the parenetic convention of *speculum* literature, was urged to conform in all his behavior to Christian standards ('Dit is waerachteliic een d' alderbeste onderwisinghe: ende als inde reste het leven ende manieren, naert uytwysen der Christelijcker Religie, hier op accorderen ende sluyten').⁷⁶ The monarch was to be an 'instrument' of the devotion ('ghebruyckende hier toe oock uwe hoocheyt') especially when it came to propagating it among his equals, the royalty, the court and aristocracy.⁷⁷ If any mention was made of the dynasty it was only to state that its members were Christian individuals with clearly-defined religious and moral obligations. The sovereign who remained faithful to God would be rewarded with new territorial possessions (the inheritance of Spain by Philip I and Charles V is explicitly mentioned), but this good fortune was expressed (and its stability maintained) in strictly religious terms: the welfare of this temporal polity always hinged on the king's authentic gratitude to God.⁷⁸

The next '*exemplum*' to persuade Charles V of the truth of the devotion were the miracles, most of which happened to simple people (especially women and children) throughout the Netherlands ('Een aldersekerste exempelen ende seer clear teecken en moghen u wesen de Miraculen der Maghet die in het Boeck der Miraculen vande seven Weeen geschreven staen').⁷⁹ In other words, Jan van Coudenberghe propagated the spiritual and physical well-being of the Christian inhabitants of the Netherlands,

⁷⁶ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 187-188.

⁷⁷ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 227.

⁷⁸ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 228.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

regardless of social rank or geographic origins, as the chief purpose of the devotion. The cult's focus on miracles was quite central in this regard and it was by no means restricted to believers in Delft. Such matter-of-fact arguments effectively defeated the position that a monarch could shape the aims of religious devotion to his advantage without taking into account the well-being of his subjects.

In the tradition of Netherlandish literature on civil ethics (*politica*) Jan van Coudenberghe frankly admonished Charles V on his responsibility as a monarch towards his subjects. If the monarch was consistent, for instance, in his dedication to universal Christian virtue (*note*: not dynastic considerations), then he would achieve success in his task of managing the civil society of the Netherlands ('alle uwe civile oft borgherlijcke ordonantien sullen goeden voortganck hebben'). In consequence, the court and nobles shall be harmonious and obedient ('onder d'Ordre van uwe Principale Edelen oft Hovelingen sal wesen goet regiment'); and the poets shall sing of a new Golden Age ('uwe ondersaten sullen de wyle sy u tot eenen Prince hebben, de gulde eeuwen, daer de poeten soo veel fabulen af versiert hebben, nu waerachtelijck genieten'). Finally, the truly virtuous Christian monarch was advised to desist from violence and revenge, offering instead to his enemies the magnanimous tokens of reconciliation.⁸⁰

The priest Jan van Coudenberghe tied Charles' ultimate success as a monarch to his agreeing to rely on shared Christian standards of behavior in relation to his subjects. This was all very far from any princely absolutism: after all, as Jan van Coudenberghe reminded the monarch, it was impossible to govern a society without the consent of the governed ('Welcke Ghemeynte ghy sonder onderstant uwer ondersaten niet wel en cont gheregheren').⁸¹ This debate with the monarch, in which the subjects sought grounds for consensus, stood in a long tradition of symbolic dialogue between the urban (secular and religious) elites and the sovereign in the Burgundian Netherlands, through the means of literature, performance and the figurative arts. Its purpose, as always, was to bring the actions of the monarch into conformity with Christian ethical standards. As G. Kipling argued, late-medieval civic triumphs were designed to achieve this goal '[...] by celebrating the ideal of Christian polity towards which the king and people must aspire in the years ahead'.⁸² The sovereign was urged to put in practice the known objective norms of conduct

⁸⁰ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 187.

⁸¹ Cf. Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 238.

⁸² Kipling, *Enter the king*, p. 47.

specific to his condition and accepted as fair and just by his subjects. In these dialogues the promotion of a community of Christian beliefs by the Church coexisted with the promotion of an orderly and peaceful civil society (*polis*). Such a society (a familiar theme of urban *parenesis*) was in the common interest of the sovereign and his lay and religious subjects. The question of what constitutes a properly-organized society is therefore essential for understanding what significance Van Coudenberghe attached to civil strife and to the restoration of peace in the Netherlands.

Writing for Charles V, the Flemish cleric Jan van Coudenberghe situated the origins of the devotion of the Seven Sorrows, of which he was the most dedicated patron, in the midst of 'riots and conflicts [that were] even worse than civil war' ('oproericheden ende twisten / ende meer argher dan inlantsche oorlogen').⁸³ On a superficial level the chaos that erupted in the Netherlands had two primary causes: the tragic death of Mary of Burgundy and the departure of her husband Maximillian to Germany in 1482. However, unlike other wars that erupted in Europe at the same time, the Netherlandish conflict of 1482-1492 was best compared, according to Van Coudenberghe, to a state of perfect insanity (*rasernye*).⁸⁴ Indeed, reading Van Coudenberghe's description of the conflict, one may remember that one of his contemporaries, the painter Hieronymus Bosch, pictured the reality around him in similar terms of madness and violence:

[...] op welcken tijt zijnder so grouwelijcke oorlogen die niet neder te legghen en waren opgeresen / dat niet alleen de Steden met veel nederlaegen / ende moorden van buyten bestreden ende overvallen en wierden. Maer dat oock het volck selver tegen den Edeldom hunne oevericheyt ende Magistraten de wapenen aenghenomen hebbende / eenen leger opgherust hadden / ende soo wie in des rasende volckx handen quam te vallen / die moest daer sonder twyfel sijnen besten hals laeten.⁸⁵

[...] at this time frightful wars broke out, to which there seemed to be no end; yet not only the towns were assaulted, having to endure many defeats and murderous attacks from the outside, but also the people, who took up arms against the nobles, their governors and magistrates, raised an army, so that anyone who fell into the hands of those raging masses had no choice but to lay down his neck.

⁸³ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, p. 188.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2.

To Van Coudenberghe the revolt against civic authority (magistrates) was one of the chief manifestations of disorder. During those years south-Netherlandish cities witnessed, for example, executions of high-placed administrators, but there was also much random violence aimed at various factions which did not necessarily have to sympathize with the Burgundian cause (Van Coudenberghe explicitly mentioned towns as coming under attack). While Van Coudenberghe, who spent most of his life in Bruges, most likely based his reflections on the situation in the southern Netherlands, riots also erupted in Holland as a result of the protracted economic malaise. A fairly late episode which took place in 1491-1492, the so-called 'Bread and Cheese' riot (*Kaas- en Broodspel*), was the result of hardship in the countryside and exorbitant taxation. The region around Delft was troubled by a series of conflicts known as the *Jonker Fransenoerlog*, during which the leader of the 'Hook' (*Hoeken*) faction, the nobleman Frans van Brederode, occupied Rotterdam and Geertruidenberg, and burned down The Hague. Frans van Brederode was defeated by the opposition, the 'Cods' (*Cabeljauwen*) under Jan van Egmont, at the battle of Brouwershavense Gat in 1490.⁸⁶

Other more complex factors, according to Van Coudenberghe, aggravated the persistent sense of chaos, especially in the cities:

[...] de Edelen waren twistende onder malckanderen / het ghemeyn volck was met haet ende nijt onder den anderen onsteken / de vrijicheden / ofte Gulden ende Ambachten streden d' een' teghen d' andere: op de vesten het ghepeupel / de Borghers / den Magistraet / deden hun goetduncken met seer verscheyden raden / ende t'volck leghers / als in eene openbare afwijckenghe door scheydinghe opgerust / hebbende gheplant / thoonde te willen vallen / met vyandighe wapenen teghen de Magistraten.⁸⁷

[...] the nobles quarreled among themselves, the common people were inflamed by hatred and envy, the free citizens, the guilds and tradesmen stood up against one another; in the towns the commoners, the citizens and the magistrates worked at cross purposes, and the people, who had summoned an army, as though equipped for an open revolt, seemed ready to march against the magistrates.

Van Coudenberghe's account is for the most part historically accurate. Even though the degree of discord among the aristocracy is probably exaggerated, there was indeed a lack of coherent political leadership on

⁸⁶ Sicking, 'De integratie van Holland', pp. 269-270.

⁸⁷ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, pp. 188-199.

the side of the revolt against Maximilian.⁸⁸ The latter, who was present throughout the rebellion, provided the steadfast leadership that led his side (including most of the Netherlandish nobility) to an eventual victory. By contrast, the chief towns of Flanders and Brabant, which stood at the head of the revolt, lacked a sense of common purpose and proved unable to surmount the obstacle of particularism. Each town followed its own self-centered military and economic agenda, very often without any regard for the interests or position of the surrounding smaller towns and villages which found themselves caught in the middle of the conflict.⁸⁹

The devotion of the Seven Sorrows has been most widely seen in recent years as the product of dynastic-political maneuvering by the Burgundian-Habsburg court. Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure van Bruaene have argued that 'Far too little attention has been paid to the coordinated efforts that Maximilian of Austria [...] and Philip the Fair made in the years following the wars to pacify urban society and to appropriate its institutions and its media for political and dynastic purposes. [...] the propagation of the devotion of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary played a crucial part in this larger strategy'.⁹⁰ However, Van Coudenberghe's account of the rebellion of 1482-1492 made hardly any mention (apart from necessary matter-of-fact historical information) that Maximilian or other members of the house of Habsburg were the principal actors in the conflict. Van Coudenberghe's focus did not fall on heatedly debated dynastic questions such as the respective rights of Maximilian and the States General during the period of Philip's childhood, but on the moral and physical well-being of the entire Netherlandish society. What makes the absence of the Burgundian dynasty at this stage of Van Coudenberghe's account all the more conspicuous is the fact that the cleric, writing his account (the *Ortus, progressus et impedimenta...*) at the request of Charles V, could have freely expanded on the role of the monarch's grandfather, the emperor Maximilian. Van Coudenberghe, however, chose not to do so, and the reason why had much to do with how he perceived this conflict.

It would be strongly anachronistic to believe that Van Coudenberghe saw the rioting of 1482-1492 as an ideologically coherent struggle for greater sovereignty of the individual provinces of the Netherlands. This sheds a light on Van Coudenberghe's rather startling observation that the revolt that broke out in the Netherlands would have made even a civ-

⁸⁸ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 30-31.

⁸⁹ Blockmans, Prevenier, *De Bourgondiërs*, p. 226.

⁹⁰ Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', p. 253.

il war between two legitimate contenders sensible by contrast (*see above*). Apparently to Van Coudenberghe the rebels had no sensible aim to speak of. Judging by Van Coudenberghe's neutral use of the term 'ons Nederlandt van herrewaerts over'⁹¹, he considered the Netherlands to be a unified organism with or without the revolt. His opposition to the revolt was not, therefore, synonymous with a straightforward choice for territorial or dynastic unity under the auspices of the house of Burgundy. Neither in the *Miracula confraternitatis VII dolorum* nor in the *Ortus, progressus et impedimenta* did Van Coudenberghe give any indication as to whether he believed that the revolt might endanger this already-existing unity in a territorial sense. What Van Coudenberghe did strongly oppose, however, was a senseless war that endangered the moral and civic cohesion of Netherlandish society. When that society was no longer based on Christian piety and civil virtues, its moral and religious dimension needed to be restored. Van Coudenberghe considered it his obligation to point out that moral vices were equally distributed among the factions of the revolt, both the house of Burgundy and the people of the Netherlands, laity and religious alike. The one person who was free of blame was the infant Philip I:

[...] voorwaer ic en meyne niet / dat dit te wijten is uwen vader / die alsdoen noch ionc was. Was hy onnoosel wien sullen wy de schult dan op leggen: uwe anderen ende t samen de geestelijcheyt ende ooc het volc? Ic vreese voorwaer dat het een gemeyn schult was, want de straffe is over al int gemeyn gecomen?⁹²

[...] truly I do not think your father can be blamed, because he was still young then. If he was innocent, who should bear the blame: your other [ancestors] and together with them the clergy and the people? I fear, indeed, that all share the blame [emphasis mine – MP], because the punishment descended equally on all.

According to Van Coudenberghe, the Netherlands were punished because they had succumbed to moral vices inspired by Satan.⁹³ These vices produced friction not only between the aristocracy and the towns but also, explicitly, led to chaos within the 'third estate' of society.

Van Coudenberghe's description of civil disorder in *Ortus, progressus et impedimenta*... strongly suggested that these vices were synonymous

⁹¹ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, p. 188.

⁹² Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 226.

⁹³ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 190.

with enmity and a disregard for the common good. Such vices manifested themselves in the particularism of every social rank, not excepting (though this is only subtly hinted at) the Burgundian dynasty. In his condemnation of civil discord Van Coudenberghe could have relied on the words of Christ in the New Testament (e.g. Mt. 12:25: 'Every kingdom divided against itself shall be made desolate: and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand'; see also Mk. 3: 24-25 and Lk 11:17). Condemnations of anger (*ira*) and one of its 'daughters', quarrelsomeness (*rixa*), could be found in the writings of Fathers of the Church: St. Gregory the Great (*Morals*, Bk. XXXI, chap. 45) and St. Thomas Aquinas.⁹⁴ But these were not the only sources where Van Coudenberghe could seek an alternative to the chaos that so alarmed him.

A model of a world of social unity – in other words, of an orderly polity in which each rank was conscious of its rights and obligations with respect to others – was advanced in 15th century Dutch literature produced for and by the town-dwelling elites. According to this model, citizens could only thrive when they acquired the skill of harmonious co-existence in a spirit of pragmatic solidarity and awareness of one's proper place on the social ladder. Conversely, the sovereign had to be lectured time and again on his attitude towards the powerful third estate.⁹⁵

The main proponents of a pragmatic *ethos* of shared moral standards among the south-Netherlandish civic elites, whose names must be mentioned in the context of Jan van Coudenberghe's ideas of social cohesion, were Jacob van Maerlant and Jan van Boendale. Jacob van Maerlant's *Heimelijckheid der heimelijkheden* (1226), a vernacular version of the *Secretum Secretorum*, was written in part to persuade the sovereign (possibly count Floris V of Holland), that his interests were best served by acting in the interests of the powerful town-dwelling elites. Although the immediate reception of Van Maerlant's work occurred in a courtly milieu, as time went on his ideas were studied by the urban patriciate of the Netherlands.⁹⁶ Roughly a century-and-half before the events witnessed by Jan van Coudenberghe, the Antwerp clerk Jan van Boendale wrote the *Lekenspiegel* (1325-1330), a treatise on morals in the tradition of *Speculum* literature written for the civic elites of the Netherlands.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Cf. Mróz, *Tajemnica ludzkich nieprawości*, pp. 445-448.

⁹⁵ Cf. Pleij, 'Inleiding' in: Pleij (ed.), *Op belofte van profijt*, pp. 28-30.

⁹⁶ Van Oostrom, 'Maerlant voor stad en burgerij', p. 57.

⁹⁷ Kinable, 'Geïntendeerde publieksgroepen in Boendales Lekenspiegel en Jans Teyste', p. 79ff. Kinable cites the passages referred to below.

In the *Lekenspiegel* Jan van Boendale expressed a range of precepts designed to serve the Christian-Aristotelian concept of the ‘common good’ (*ghemeen oorbaer*). One of these precepts was the promotion of a unified agenda (in political terms) and of consistent moral standards among the citizens (*poorteren*) of the town. Jan van Boendale saw a conflict among citizens as a path to chaos:

Al noch so waers noot
 Inden lande hier, twaren,
 Dat poorteren eendrachtich waren
 Inden lande daer si sijn,
 Of het sal nemen quaden fijn,
 Alst in vele landen heeft ghedaen:
 God laet ons ten besten vergaen!⁹⁸

[*There fore it is necessary for citizens to be united in the country [variant reading: town], for otherwise they will come to a bad end, similarly to what happened in other countries; may God protect us for the best*]

In a different passage Jan van Boendale expressed a critique of civic discord as one of the factors that had caused the downfall of ancient Rome.⁹⁹ This was another instructive example of the need for social cohesion on which the civic elites could model their actions and discourses.

Other later-medieval sources where a program for a civil society (*polis*) built along Christian-Aristotelian lines was expressed, included, for instance, the popular confession manual *Des conincx summe*. This widely reproduced book circulated in the towns in both manuscript and printed form (several printed editions appeared in Delft before the end of the 15th century). It contained an attractive dialogue between a town-dweller and a knight, showing that burgherdom and nobility were not mutually exclusive but, as a matter of fact, could be regarded as complementary. Instead of promoting conflict, *Des conincx summe* played into a vision of a civil society whose lay ranks supported one another’s aims in a spirit of mutual solidarity.¹⁰⁰

The same concept of solidarity instead of conflict between various tiers of society was advanced in *Dat scaecspel*, a heavily re-worked Netherlandish adaptation of the allegorical treatise on the game of chess (*Ludus Scaccorum*) written by the North-Italian Dominican Jacobus de Cessolis. The symbolism of the chess game as a didactic allegory of

⁹⁸ Boendale, *Lekenspiegel*, vol. i, p. 40.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, p. 79.

society was popular among the courtly and urban (lay and ecclesiastic) elites of the Netherlands. In *Dat scaecspel* the king was assigned the qualities of *vroetscap* (reason in temporal matters) and *wijsheit* (wisdom and piety in relation to God), but most of all he was reminded of his obligation to be concerned with justice. Most significantly, all relations within (hierarchical) society had to be cemented by friendship (a reference that betrayed the author's indebtedness to Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*). By contrast, bickering or quarreling were discouraged as the quality of lowlifes and criminals. The purpose of the whole exercise (according to Jacobus de Cessolis) was to temper the sovereign's natural inclination towards tyranny by imbuing his heart and mind with virtue.¹⁰¹ Similar themes of chess as a social allegory were explored in simplified form around 1400 by the Dominican Dirc van Delft in the *Tafel van den kersten ghelove*.¹⁰² *Dat scaecspel* later became one of the first bestsellers of the printing press; one of its early editions was published by Van der Meer in Delft (*Boek dat men hiet dat scaecspel*, 1483). Finally, one must mention a commentary to a Dutch translation of Boethius' *De consolatione philosophiae* that came out in Ghent in 1485 (the printer was Arend de Keyzere). In that commentary the importance of social cohesion was propagated by means of passages cited from Aristotle (*Politica* and *Ethica*), Sallustius, St. Augustine (*De Civitate Dei* and a homily), and the letters of St. Paul (to the Romans and to Timothy). These passages were not cited from the original but were most probably adapted from a *florilegium*, a collection of useful quotations on a given topic.¹⁰³ Such a *florilegium* might have resembled, for instance, the volume *Proverbia seriosa* published in 1495 by Christiaen Snellaert in Delft.

By now it should be clear that the literary conventions that Van Coudenberghe relied on to describe the conflict of 1482-1492 situate him in the company of these and other vernacular writers and translators of Christian-Aristotelian moral treatises. Although the laity is generally believed to have comprised the majority of readers of vernacular literature on the ethics of a civil society, Herman Pleij, who analyzed the late-15th century book inventory of the Brussels priest Johannes Suweels, proved that secular priests were also keen readers of chapbooks and instructive parenetic texts written for the urban elites.¹⁰⁴ It was a group where we can safely situate Van Coudenberghe, his Delft associates, and the mem-

¹⁰¹ Van Herwaarden, 'Dat Scaecspel: a profane-ethical exploration', pp. 309-337.

¹⁰² Van Delf, *Tafel van den kersten ghelove* (ed. Daneels), vol. iib, pp. 567-595.

¹⁰³ Wackers, 'Buecken die men leest in scolen', p. 115.

¹⁰⁴ Pleij, '1488: De boekeninventaris van wijlen Johannes Suweels', pp. 116-120.

bers of his circle of priestly administrators and advisors to the court. Additionally, Van Coudenberghe would have been thoroughly familiar with the *auctoritates* (Aristotle, the Church Fathers, especially St. Augustine, etc.), and with the contents of various *florilegia* that belonged to a Latin school education; obviously, as a priest he would have had thorough knowledge of the relevant passages of the Vulgate on any of these topics.

In his letter to Charles V, Jan van Coudenberghe resorted to a model of social order and harmony that had been propagated through vernacular literature on 'profane ethics' among the Netherlandish civic elites at least a century before the Habsburg dynasty appeared in the Netherlands. It was a model that relied on the reading of the *auctoritates*, of medieval moralizing literature in Latin and the vernacular, and on the knowledge of the Vulgate. Obviously, none of these depended on the political involvement or patronage of the Burgundian court. This exercise in contextualizing Van Coudenberghe's discourse of Christian social unity has important consequences for our understanding of the nature of the devotion to the Seven Sorrows. Was it a devotion exclusively propagated by the court to promote its policies (or politics)? A brief side-note is required here on the meaning of the term 'political' – a label that, as we have seen, is commonly attached to the devotion of the Seven Sorrows. If this term 'political' is to be used in the context of Jan van Coudenberghe's Seven Sorrows devotion, one must at the very least be sensitive to the fact that many of the modern meanings of this term are anachronistic in the context of the early 16th century Netherlands. The Dutch adjective *politiek*, a loan-word from the French (*politique*), is actually unattested before 1582.¹⁰⁵ Therefore if we are to speak at all in terms of the 'political', then this term should be understood, after the usage of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, as referring to the state of affairs in the Christian civil society (*polis*) of the Netherlands. In other words, 'political' should be understood as a synonym of the word *burgerlijk* ('pertaining to the *burg(h)er*, i.e. the individual member of a civil society), and not as a category defining the interests of any narrow 'political' group or faction.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ The first attested usage of the word *politiek* (then spelled e.g. *politijck*) in *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* comes from Dirk Volckertszoon Coornhert, but this term only gained wider use during the factional conflicts in the Dutch Republic at the beginning of the 17th century (WNT, 'Politiek' 1. a.).

¹⁰⁶ The affairs of a civil society (*polis*) were denoted throughout the 16th and 17th century by the vernacular term 'burgerlijk'; for a discussion of terminology related to the *polis* and its inhabitants, such as the terms *burg(h)er* and *burgerlijk*, see e.g. Meijer Drees, 'Zeventiende-eeuwse literatuur in de Republiek: burgerlijk?', pp. 63-79.

The Seven Sorrows devotion ultimately realized (insofar as it was possible in a divided society) the ideal of a truly Christian civil society (*polis*) in which all ranks were united through meditation on the lives of the Virgin Mary and Christ. Van Coudenberghe's letter to Charles V and his vision of Netherlandish society in *Ortus, progressus et impedimenta...* exemplify how the Church corrected what it regarded as an erroneous interpretation of the devotion. More specifically, in his writings Jan van Coudenberghe defended Christian-Aristotelian values against the more narrow 'dynastic' objectives of the Habsburg court. The fact that there was, ultimately, an irreconcilable gap between Van Coudenberghe's views and those of Charles V, suggests that recent scholarly views of the devotion as a 'political confession' capture merely one side of the picture. As we will point out in more detail, such views seem to be excessively colored by non-ecclesiastic sources.¹⁰⁷ Yet as a matter of fact, Van Coudenberghe's statements on the aims of the devotion are in no way less credible than Charles V's. As a respected senior cleric, the former actually represented the official position of the Church in a way that the latter (or any other member of the Burgundian-Habsburg dynasty) did not. The discourses of Christian-Aristotelian civil ethics provided Van Coudenberghe with an instrument to re-assert his Christian religious program of the Seven Sorrows devotion over the dynastic program of the youthful Charles V. In this process, Van Coudenberghe tutored the monarch on his obligations towards the Church and the Christian civil society of the Netherlands. Resisting attempts by the Burgundian-Habsburg rulers to narrow down the scope of the worship of the Seven Sorrows to a particularist agenda, the Church successfully defended this devotion in the context of a familiar model of a harmonious Christian society that could rely on the solidarity and co-operation of the inhabitants of the Netherlands.

2.5. LITERARY NETWORKS OF THE DEVOTION OF THE SEVEN SORROWS IN THE NETHERLANDS

When Netherlandish society found itself eventually restored to a state of peace around 1492, this came about by other than political or military means. Indeed, it was through divine intervention (according to Van

¹⁰⁷ See footnote 199 below.

Coudenberghe) that God recalled the war which represented a just punishment in equal measure for the sins of all inhabitants of the Netherlands ('eenen gemeyn schult').¹⁰⁸ Van Coudenberghe explicitly ruled out that human intervention could adequately heal the wounds of civil strife:

Ende van waer sijn ghecomen sulcken remedien / die / op staende voet / ons hebben gheholpen. Wie heeft God die vergramt was ghepaeyt? Wie heeft sijne gramschappe geblust? Voorwaer wy en hebben gheene redene om te dencken dat de gratie van soo bermhertighe ghenade wt den menschen ghesproten is.¹⁰⁹

And where did the remedies come from, which immediately helped us? Who pacified an angry God? Who extinguished his anger? Indeed, we have no reason to think that the grace of this compassionate mercy was of human origin.

The Brussels-born cleric situated the devotion firmly within the realm of revealed religion. By this he implied that the devotion belonged outside the scope of any immanent dynastic or political agenda. Moreover, Jan van Coudenberghe immediately placed the devotion to the Seven Sorrows (in words addressed directly to Charles V) on the plane of general religious and moral renewal (transgression, punishment and atonement) of all Christians in the Netherlands. The main motivation for the rise of the Seven Sorrows devotion was therefore, in equal measure, a sense of impending physical danger and of aggravated moral crisis: 'As the peril increased, so did the devotion [of the Seven Sorrows]' ('[...] iae hoe de benaetheden grooter werden / soo wert oock meer verbreyt dese devotie').¹¹⁰

The devotion to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary was a spiritual remedy whose fruits, in the still uniformly Christian (Catholic) society of the late-medieval Netherlands could be accessible to one and all. In 1484 Jan van Coudenberghe was given the pastorate at Haamstede, in the decanate of Schouwen (Zeeland), but after one year this position went to his brother Paulus who held it until 1525. On 12 August 1486 Jan van Coudenberghe was appointed priest at the prestigious church of St. Salvator in Bruges, where he mainly resided, and at the much more modest church of SS. Peter and Paul at Reimerswaal (Zeeland). At this point Jan van Coudenberghe was already acting as secretary (*secretarius regius*) to Philip I. Probably during the same decade Jan van Coudenberghe ad-

¹⁰⁸ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, p. 226.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 194.

ditionally obtained the position of dean of the chapter of St. Aegidius (formed in 1483) at Abbenbroek, at the very south-westernmost point of Holland.¹¹¹ It is striking that, except for Bruges, the first known centers of the Seven Sorrows devotion, Abbenbroek and Reimerswaal, were minor provincial towns. While Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne-Laure van Bruaene have argued that the choice of Abbenbroek and Reimerswaal in the 'core provinces' of the Burgundian Netherlands was not coincidental,¹¹² it does seem remarkable that in terms of the geography of Holland and Zeeland these peripherally-located towns were hardly the best choice to act as regional centers for a new devotion. Furthermore, the sources which might prove beyond any doubt that at this stage a deliberate strategic decision was made regarding Van Coudenberghe's nomination to these churches have yet to be discovered.

In all three churches that came under his ecclesiastical responsibility Jan van Coudenberghe or one of his associates installed images of the Virgin Mary as an aid to worship.¹¹³ These images did not yet show the heart of the Virgin Mary penetrated by seven swords as did the later icons of the Seven Sorrows devotion. Even though Van Coudenberghe could have found plenty of local models for an image of the *Mater dolorosa* in the art of the Netherlands,¹¹⁴ the images at Reimerswaal and Abbenbroek were conceived as exact copies of sacred paintings venerated in Rome. The image at Reimerswaal was a copy of a Byzantine icon of the *Hodegetria* type from the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore known as *Salus Populi Romani*. The painting at Abbenbroek was a copy of a half-length *Mater dolorosa*, also Byzantine in provenance, from the Church of Santa Maria in Aracoeli.¹¹⁵ Both the images that served as a model for those at Reimerswaal and Abbenbroek had been associated with the figure of St. Luke, the apostle who according to tradition painted the first likeness of the Virgin Mary. The choice of the icons '[...] in part reflects the widespread popularity of St. Luke virgins in the Netherlands

¹¹¹ Fruytier, 'Coudenberghe (Jan de)' in: *NNBW*, vol. vii, pp. 333-334.

¹¹² Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The devotion of the Seven Sorrows', p. 264.

¹¹³ Jan van Coudenberghe did not present himself as the initiator of this action; in his account the images were installed by 'a certain person' ('seker persooene'). Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Weeen*, p. 191.

¹¹⁴ Examples of the type of *Mater dolorosa* in the Netherlandish art of the 15th century have been widely documented by Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 17.

¹¹⁵ Schuler, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-20; Graas (T.) 'Reimerswaal, O.L. Vrouw van Zeven Smarten'; Graas (D.), 'Abbenbroek, O.L. Vrouw van Zeven Smarten'.

of the fifteenth century'.¹¹⁶ But there is yet another reason why this selection of images can be called deliberate. The theological dimension of the icon *Salus Populi Romani*, with its history of miracles, specifically addressed the concerns of a Christian civil society in distress. The practice of invoking in times of great need, through that sign, the protection of the Virgin Mary over Christian society, dated back at least to the time of Pope Gregory the Great.¹¹⁷ It constituted (and in fact still does to this day) an intrinsic part of the universal (i.e. not only Burgundian-Habsburg or Netherlandish) identity of Roman Catholics.

The icons in Reimerswaal and Abbenbroek were reproduced in a handbook titled *Dit es een seer deuote salige ende profitelicke gedenckenisse van den vij. weeden oft droefheyden onser lieuer vrouwen* (Antwerp: Gerard Leeu, 14 July 1492).¹¹⁸ To the images at Reimerswaal, Abbenbroek and Bruges a plaque was added bearing a verse on the Seven Sorrows, the text of which (in original Latin or in a Dutch translation) was reproduced in a number of devotional treatises.¹¹⁹ It was this verse, and not the painting itself, that inspired the devotional practice which consisted of saying one Our Father and one Hail Mary while contemplating each sorrow.¹²⁰

When Philip I was still an infant ('onmondich kindeken')¹²¹ a confraternity was established to further stimulate the devotion to the Seven Sorrows. Van Coudenberghe's efforts in this regard situated themselves within a wider European tradition of Marian piety. It is believed that the model of a religious brotherhood was supplied by the already existing Confraternity of the Rosary, founded by the Dominican Jacob Sprenger in Cologne in 1475.¹²² The rosary devotion was fostered in the Netherlands by Alanus de Rupe (Alain de la Roche, 1428-1475), who founded what is believed to be first confraternity of the rosary at Douai (c. 1470).¹²³ The model for the

¹¹⁶ Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 20.

¹¹⁷ Richardson, *Reclaiming Rome*, pp. 224-227.

¹¹⁸ *Dit es een seer deuote salige ende profitelicke gedenckenisse van den vij. weeden oft droefheyden onser lieuer vrouwen*, Antwerp: Gerard Leeu, 14 July 1492 (ILC 888).

¹¹⁹ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, pp. 191-193.

¹²⁰ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 192.

¹²¹ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 2.

¹²² Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 18.

¹²³ Schuler, *op. cit.*, p. 18, n. 50; Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', p. 261. See also Prędota, 'Een onbekend exempel over Alanus de Rupe', pp. 248-252, for research on a text discovered in Wrocław, Biblioteka Kapitułna, Ms. 716, fol. 165v-167r.

confraternity of the Seven Sorrows was apparently transferred from the confraternity of the rosary by one of De Rupe's followers, the Dominican Michael Franciscus de Insulis (Michel François de Lille, Michiel Franszoon van Rijssel) who was also connected to the ecclesiastic circles around Philip I by virtue of being the young prince's personal confessor. Together with Philip I's tutor Frans Busleiden, De Insulis was instrumental in securing the duke's backing for the devotion in 1492. Philip I's patronage was advertised through the publication of a Latin compendium.¹²⁴ The adolescent duke's desire to act not only as the official founder but as 'master and lord' ('Meester ende Heer') of the new devotion was greeted with satisfaction by his uncle, David of Burgundy, bishop of Utrecht. Philip I's zealous exclamation, although doubtless betraying his forceful character, was welcomed as a passionate profession of the Christian faith.¹²⁵

In 1494 bishop David of Burgundy commissioned an investigation into a series of Marian miracles at Abbenbroek. From this point onwards the miracles became intrinsically connected with the cult at its sites in Holland, Zeeland and Flanders. By far the largest number of these miracles (178 out of 210 reported ones) occurred in Delft, where the cult flourished officially since 1503 under the protection of the Delft priest Dirck Adamsz van der Burch. An investigation by David of Burgundy stated that the Delft miracles were legitimate. Its effect was the publication of a series of books on this subject containing accounts of miracles (*miracula*). Jan van Coudenberghe compiled *Miracula confraternitatis septem dolorum beatissime Virginis Mariae* (Antwerp: Henric Lettersnijder [c. 1496]),¹²⁶ which were later expanded in a series of editions. Meanwhile, an undated booklet on this subject in the vernacular, *Miraculen onser liever Vrouwen*, was quickly published before the end of the 15th century, probably by Jacob Jacobsz van der Meer and Mauricius Yemantsz.¹²⁷ Van Coudenberghe's *Miracula confraternitatis septem*

¹²⁴ *Confraternitas dolorum beatissime virginis marie Autore domino Philippo archiduce austrie dux burgondie brabantie etc. novissime erecta*, [Antwerp: Govaert Bac, pre-1493] (ILC 611). Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', p. 260.

¹²⁵ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, p. 195-198. Cf. Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 44-45.

¹²⁶ *Miracula confraternitatis septem dolorum beatissime Virginis Mariae* (Antwerp: Henric Lettersnijder, [1496]). Reference to miracles can be found in Michael Franciscus de Insulis, *Quodlibetica decisio perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus christifere virginis Mariae ac communi et saluberrima confraternitate desuper instituta* (Antwerp: Thierry Martens, [1496-1497]) (ILC 998) (Schuler, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 21).

¹²⁷ *Miraculen Onser Liever Vrouwen* [Delft: Jacob Jacobsz van der Meer and Mauricius Yemantsz, between 10 January 1477 and 20 November 1479] (ILC 1601).

dolorum sacratissime virginis Marie (Antwerp: Godfried Back, 1510) were published, apart from the Latin version, in French and Dutch,¹²⁸ and followed by *Miracula confraternitatis VII dolorum* (Antwerp, Michael van Hoochstraten, 1519), the last booklet authored by Jan van Coudenberghe.¹²⁹

When the legitimacy of the new devotion was questioned by a group of Louvain theologians, De Insulis issued a formal justification of the practices of the Confraternity, *Quodlibetica decisio perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus christifere virginis Mariae ac communi et saluberrima confraternitate desuper instituta* (Antwerp: Thierry Martens, [1496-1497]). Van Coudenberghe referred to this investigation in Article VI of the *Ortus, progressus et impedimenta*....¹³⁰ De Insulis' *Quodlibetica* apparently aroused interest outside the Netherlands, for his work was reprinted in the Austrian city of Schrattenthal in 1501.¹³¹ Another early promoter of the devotion was Petrus de Manso (Peter Verhoeven), dean of Brill in Zeeland and rector of the monastery of Thabor, near Mechelen (the residence of the Burgundian court). De Manso composed an office (*officium*) of the Seven Sorrows. This office was set to music by Peter de Wez, provost of Condé.¹³² Mass and hours of the Seven Sorrows were reported by

¹²⁸ Only the Latin version has survived to this day. *Miracula confraternitatis septem dolorum sacratissime virginis Marie* (Antwerp: Godfried Back, 1510).

¹²⁹ *Miracula confraternitatis VII dolorum* (Antwerp: Michael Hillen van Hoochstraten, 1519). The only copy was destroyed during World War II. This text was re-published by Georges Colvenier (Colvener), *Miracula ducenta decem confraternitatis septem dolorum sanctissimae virginis Mariae Miracula CCX confraternitatis VII. dolorum sanctissimae virginis Mariae* (Douai: Pierre Avroy 1619). Colvenier's edition is considered a reliable one, see Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 351, n. 7. A trustworthy vernacular translation was made by Jacobus Stratius in *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Weeen*, pp. 1-179 (on the reliability of this translation see Verhoeven, *op. cit.*, n. 4). A modern diplomatic edition of Colvenier's *Miracula CCX* (Latin text) and Stratius, *Onse L. Vrouwe* (Dutch text) is provided by Verhoeven, *ibid.*, pp. 228-298.

¹³⁰ Michael Franciscus de Insulis, *Quodlibetica decisio perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus christifere virginis Mariae ac communi et saluberrima confraternitate desuper instituta* (Antwerp: Thierry Martens, [1496-1497]) (ILC 998). This incident was described by Van Coudenberghe in *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Weeen*, pp. 198-202.

¹³¹ Michael Franciscus de Insulis, *Quodlibetica decisio perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus Christi ferae virginis Mariae* (Schrattenthal: Martin Eytzinger, 1501). Bayrische Staatsbibliothek VD 16 F 2206.

¹³² As dean of Brill (Den Briel, Zeeland), De Manso can be considered a 'neighbor' of the Van Coudenberghe brothers, both of whom were pastors in the same province. Perhaps this territorial proximity, rather than ties to the court, were decisive in securing De Manso's involvement in the devotion. Cf. Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Weeen*, p. 205-209.

Jan van Coudenberghe as being said at Rome, Cambrai, Douai, Deventer and 'nearly all of Holland'.¹³³ In 1494 Pope Alexander VI issued a bull acknowledging the confraternity and ordering a theological investigation to be undertaken. This investigation was completed on 13 February 1497 by Paulus de Porta, dean of the collegiate church of Renaix (Flanders), residing at Louvain. The rules for the confraternity, as propagated in their final version by Jan van Coudenberghe, were the result of this investigation.¹³⁴

The existence of a distinct causal relationship between the secular aims of the Burgundian-Habsburg court and the religious world of the priestly promoters of the devotion (as well as town-dwelling lay and secular devotees) is a matter of some debate. It has been argued that the aim of the confraternity was 'to create a large spiritual community that *directly supported* [it. mine – M.P.] the dynasty and its ideology of peace and territorial unity'.¹³⁵ However, under the rules formulated in 1497 the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows was to be a purely spiritual one, its only purpose being to unite all willing Christians in prayer and meditation on the sorrows of the Virgin Mary. This aim was expressly formulated in simple terms, making the theological principles of the cult intelligible even to simple people ('want dese dinghen worden voor den onghelerden gheschreven').¹³⁶ The strictly egalitarian rules of the confraternity stated that it was to be open to all Christians, both men and women, lay and religious, regardless of their station in life.¹³⁷ The only obligation was a spiritual one: to contemplate the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary once or twice a week. At each Sorrow the devotee was to say seven Our Fathers and seven Hail Mary's for the spiritual benefit of him-/herself and other members of the Confraternity, both alive and deceased ('met sulcker meynigen / dat alle die vande selven Broederschap sijn / soudē deelachtich worden vande voorseyde meditatie oft overdenckinge ende vande voorschreven gebeden').¹³⁸

¹³³ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, p. 205-209. The naming of Deventer is not surprising, for it was there that Gerard Leeu and the Collaciebroeders published several early tracts on the Seven Sorrows devotion.

¹³⁴ Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 269.

¹³⁵ Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-264

¹³⁶ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, p. 191.

¹³⁷ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 3.

¹³⁸ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 4.

In the confraternity an egalitarian community of worship was created where all Christians, from the sovereign to the very least of his subjects, were united in religious contemplation. Any member of the confraternity, and even non-members (with no restrictions), could benefit from prayers offered for their benefit by others. The sovereign prayed alongside his Christian subjects, and all prayed for the souls of the departed members of the community. The devotion of the Seven Sorrows was (like the Rosary) a structured prayer, but now the spiritual fruits of that pious and 'pleasing sacrifice' ('een aenghenaem sacrificie')¹³⁹ were imparted to all those taking part in this devotion. The inclusion of departed members of the Confraternity in the devotion should be seen in the context of the Christian (Catholic) religious culture of intercession in which devout spiritual offerings in the form of prayer by the faithful are an important instrument in assisting in the salvation of the deceased.¹⁴⁰

Even though arguments have been raised hinting at the existence of 'a strong undercurrent of Burgundian nostalgia'¹⁴¹, there is absolutely no evidence in Van Coudenberghe's devotional texts that would suggest the house of Burgundy was in some way privileged in the form or content of the prayers which formed the condition for membership. Even were this to be the case, praying for the sovereign (and indeed for the well-being of the entire Christian polity) cannot be considered at all unusual in the late-medieval Christian culture of Europe. There was a theological basis for such prayer in an injunction conveyed by St. Paul in the Epistle to Timothy:

I desire therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men: For kings, and for all that are in high station: that we may lead a quiet and a peaceable life in all piety and chastity. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth.¹⁴²

The prayers of the devotion could be offered for the benefit of non-members of the Confraternity on condition that such prayers had been said at least twenty times. Such a spiritual sacrifice did not require the permission (or even the knowledge) of the 'addressee' with whose intention the prayers were said. The manner in which this occurred was up to the individual who said the prayer. In fact, the members of the confraternity

¹³⁹ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 226.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Scannell, 'Intercession (Mediation)' in *CE*, vol. viii, p. 70-72.

¹⁴¹ Van Bruaene, 'The Habsburg Theatre State', p. 138.

¹⁴² 1 Tm 2,1-4. All passages of the Holy Bible are cited after the Douay-Rheims Version (Challoner revision). For a note on this translation, see p. 391.

did not even have to be aware of one another's existence. It has been argued that 'At first sight [membership in the confraternity] was more about numbers than about deep conviction'.¹⁴³ Aside from the question of what standards can be applied to measure religious conviction, there is the obvious issue that one cannot limit the participation in an essentially private devotion of this kind to the 6,085 individuals who signed the Confraternity's register in the first year when it was held (1499).¹⁴⁴ The rules laid down by Jan van Coudenberghe did not specify that signing a list was mandatory, and although in some localities this was done collectively by priests, male and female religious, laymen and -women, and beguines¹⁴⁵, the recording of names was in no way systematic. Such records were maintained in the southern Netherlands. However, specific registers for Delft, where the practice of the devotion existed continuously throughout the 16th century and probably even longer (*see below*), have yet to be discovered.

That the Confraternity of the Seven Sorrows was to be an egalitarian community of worship in which all members were on an equal footing, was in itself a daring innovation in a hierarchic society. Membership in the Confraternity was planned by Jan van Coudenberghe in such a way as to explicitly preclude any factional divisions. The risk of factional strife would have been considerably greater had the confraternities been free to decide who could and who could not become a member in each town. Nor were fees to be an obstacle. Membership was explicitly free of any charge or obligation ('ontvangen ende inghestelt gheweest sonder eenighen last of cost'),¹⁴⁶ a fact that was reiterated on several subsequent occasions.

The devotion of the Seven Sorrows is frequently presented as an instrument of political propaganda that was '[...] ingeniously revived and appropriated in the late fifteenth century by the Habsburg court in the Low Countries'.¹⁴⁷ The egalitarian religious ideas of the confraternity, however, were not as much the product of the cosmopolitan aristocratic milieus supportive of Maximilian of Habsburg as of the urban elites of the Netherlands. The fourth point of the rules of the confraternity announced that the devotional obligations of the members could be per-

¹⁴³ Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', p. 263.

¹⁴⁴ *Liber authenticus*, fol. 161r-223r.

¹⁴⁵ Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', p. 265.

¹⁴⁶ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, p. 191.

¹⁴⁷ Van Bruaene, 'The Habsburg Theatre State', p. 137.

formed and the fruits thereof could now be gathered in the private space of one's own home, or literally, 'at all times and wherever one sees fit' ('dat een jegelijck op alle tijden ende ure / ter wat plaetsen hy mach wesen / dese overdenckinge ende gebeden doende / sal mogen verdienen de Goddelijcke vergeldinge / ende loon deser Sodaliteyt').¹⁴⁸

This tendency to allow more freedom for private worship and contemplation, which, of course, did in no way collide with the individual's attendance at Mass and participation in the Holy Sacraments administered by the Church, became first widespread not at the Habsburg-Burgundian court but among the city-dwelling middle-class of the Netherlands. There, since the 15th century, the notion that internalized pious practices could be independent of set hours or fixed places was being propagated, independently, by the Modern Devotion,¹⁴⁹ as well as through various 'structured devotions' for individual or collective use such as, for instance, the 'hundred articles' of Henry Suso. Unlike already existing devotional brotherhoods, which required a specific physical space and where members were obliged to contribute financially to the religious activities (maintaining altars, installing a priest to say the liturgy of the hours, holding regular festivities, etc.) no such demands were placed on the members of the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows.

The question that can be asked, therefore, is whether the cult of the Seven Sorrows was considered new or in any way revolutionary in the Netherlands during the early-modern period. On the one hand, the answer should be a positive one. Evidence that the devotion of the Seven Sorrows encountered opposition from those who deemed it to be a dangerous theological novelty can be found, in the first place, in the writings of Jan van Coudenberghe and his associates, who made no secret of the fact that the Confraternity was under constant attack.¹⁵⁰ The arguments

¹⁴⁸ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, p. 4.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Thomas à Kempis: '[...] the man who knows how to walk the road of the inward life, and set little store by things outside of himself, has no need of special places, nor set times, to perform his exercises of devotion' (*Imitation of Christ*, p. 85). Cited by Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 42. The interiorization of piety by the Modern Devout, the practice of meditation and of spiritual recapitulation are described by Dąbrówka, *Teatr i sacrum w średniowieczu*, pp. 333-350.

¹⁵⁰ Cf. Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, art. vi, pp. 198-202; [art. xiii], pp. 217-219; art. xvii, pp. 229-233, art. xx, pp. 241-245, art. xxi, pp. 245-246. Objections to the confraternity are outlined e.g. by Michels, 'De letteren in dienst van de propaganda voor Coudenberghe's Broederschap', pp. 395-403.

aimed against this type of worship are known in the form in which the Bruges cleric reported them in *Ortus, progressus et impedimenta*...:

Wat is dit voor een nieuwe maniere van doen? wat vreemde superstitie is dit? op wat gront? op wat fundament steunt sy? wat kercke / wat vergaderinghe / wat collegie belijdt dese opentlijck? Dit is den raedt ende droom van oude Vraukens / het is eenen nieuwen vont / door dolinghe ghedicht: want waer dit van Godt / of het soude steunicheyt hebben van sijnen ouderdom / oft door het aennemen van eenich vermaert Collegie / oft door eenige vermaerde plaetse / niet sulcks en canmen vinden oft opbrenghen. Ist eene Religie / wat gronden van erven / wat chynsen / wat renten heeft sy?¹⁵¹

What novelty is this? What strange superstition? What is it based on? What is its [theological] foundation? What church,[religious] community or chapter professes it openly? These are the tales and dreams of old women; it is a new finding, inspired by heresy, for had it come from God, then its antiquity would provide adequate arguments, or else some notable chapter or noted shrine would participate in this devotion, but none such can be found. If it is a religion, what estates, what taxes, what rents has it acquired?

The egalitarian principles of the confraternity, which sought to unite in one community of prayer all willing Christians regardless of age, gender, or social rank, required intense work to persuade the higher Church authorities to protect the confraternity against its critics. According to Jan van Coudenberghe, most of this critique was aimed at the confraternity because its revolutionary refusal to request financial gratification from its members endangered the position of other existing religious brotherhoods which he believed to be strongly money-oriented ('vande andere Broederschappen / die van outs ingestelt zijn / hebben sy sulcken gheldtfeesten ghemaect / datmen / achterlatende den dienst om den welcken sy inghestelt zijn / anders niet dan van gelt en peyntst'). Van Coudenberghe even went so far as to accuse some brotherhoods of usury: 'de Godsdiensticheyt gebruycken als een woecker tafel'.¹⁵²

In his defense of the confraternity of the Seven Sorrows in *Quodlibetica*, Michael Franciscus de Insulis, however, took the view that the confraternity was by no means a novelty. De Insulis specifically situated the devotion within the context of respected religious confraternities (e.g. the confraternity of the rosary) and in the domain of orthodox theology. Symbolic of the latter can be an etching (in the Schrattenthal

¹⁵¹ Cf. Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, p. 242.

¹⁵² Cf. Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 243.

edition) which shows the sorrowing Virgin Mary in the company of the Doctors of the Church: St. Augustine and St. Bernard of Clairvaux.¹⁵³ In the 17th century, Georges Colvenier (who, as chancellor of the university of Douai, was a well-informed theologian in his own right), expressed the same opinion about the devotion popularized by Van Coudenberghe. To prove his point ('op dat niemant en meyne dat dit [...] eenen nieuwen vont is'), Colvenier came up with a list of 16 commonplaces in the writings of the Saints, Church Fathers and various medieval devotional authors documenting the orthodoxy and continuity of the theology underlying the devotion of the Seven Sorrows.¹⁵⁴

Between 1492 and 1519 Van Coudenberghe and his associates clarified in several Netherlandish and Latin treatises the rules of the confraternity and explained the circumstances under which it was founded. In these books they also provided the faithful with hours and special prayers. The earliest of these tracts was Petrus de Manso's *Devote gedenckenisse van de vij Weeden oft droefheyden onser lieven Vrouwen* ('Devout considerations on the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady') published in Antwerp by Gerard Leeu (1492).¹⁵⁵ The second booklet was printed shortly afterwards, also at Antwerp, by Leeu or his associates.¹⁵⁶ A slightly modified edition was produced at the house of the Brethren of the Common Life (the Collaciebroeders) at Gouda.¹⁵⁷ Soon afterwards, two early devotional books on the Seven Sorrows came out in Delft: *Van den seven droefheden ofte weeden Onser Lieven Vrouwen* was printed by Christiaen Snellaert in 1494. Three years later the same book was re-issued by Snellaert or his successor Eckert.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵³ Michael Franciscus de Insulis, *Quodlibetica decisio perpulchra et devota de septem doloribus Christi ferae virginis Mariae*, Schrattenthal: Martin Eytzinger, 1501, fol. 98.

¹⁵⁴ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius, (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, fol. +5v.

¹⁵⁵ *Dit es een seer deuote salige ende profitelicke gedenckenisse van den vij. weeden oft droefheyden onser lieuer vrouwen*, Antwerp: Gerard Leeu, 14 July 1492 (ILC 888).

¹⁵⁶ *Hier beghint een goede oefeninghe ende een seer deuote meditacye van sonderlingen vij ween onser sueter vrouwen ende moeder gods marien*, Antwerp: [Gerard Leeu, 1492] (ILC 887).

¹⁵⁷ *Van de seven droefheden ofte weeden Onser lieuer vrouwen*, Gouda: Collaciebroeders, 12 September 1494 (ILC 890).

¹⁵⁸ *Vanden seuen droefheden ofte weeden onser lieuen vrouwen*, Delft: [Christiaen Snellaert], 17 July 1494 (ILC 889).

Vanden seuen droefheden ofte weden onser lieuen vrouwen, Delft: [Christiaen Snellaert or Hendrik Eckert van Homberch], 16 March 1497 (ILC 891).

Distribution through the medium of print occurred simultaneously with the production of manuscripts. The Van Hooff manuscript, an illuminated prayer-book produced around 1520 in the Southern Netherlands, most probably in Brugge, contained a series of meditations on the Seven Sorrows and a miniature of the image of the Virgin Mary in Abbenbroek.¹⁵⁹ The same process occurred in Delft, but there owners modified existing illuminated prayer books through the addition of new prayers and illuminations.¹⁶⁰ To a prayer book from c. 1490 an illuminator, in all likelihood employed in Delft, added an illustration of all Seven Sorrows on a single leaf.¹⁶¹ The arrangement of the sorrows in medallions displayed around a central scene of the Crucifixion was possibly modeled on the devotional prints produced in Delft between 1507 and 1514.

2.6. WRITING ABOUT MIRACLES: THE LITERARY NETWORKS OF THE CONFRATERNITY OF THE SEVEN SORROWS IN DELFT

The main centers of the devotion of the Seven Sorrows in Holland were Abbenbroek (since c. 1490), Leiden (since c. 1494),¹⁶² Delft (c. 1500) and The Hague (c. 1515).¹⁶³ Possibly, the cult of the Seven Sorrows arose in Delft through the personal connections of Antonius Mettenye, pastor

Further proof of the cooperation between the Delft propagators of the cult of the Seven Sorrows and the Collaciebroeders can be found in the fact that a 'Broer Jan Melisz van der Goude', most likely one of the brethren, produced the Delft devotional print dating from 1510. This print contained the escutcheons of Delft and Gouda. Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 48.

¹⁵⁹ [Gebedenboek Van Hooff], ca. 1520, illuminated by Cornelia van Wulfschkerke (d. 1540), a Carmelite nun working at Brugge. Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek Vrije Universiteit, XV.05502, fol. 54v-55v. On the Abbenbroek painting see Graas (D.), 'Abbenbroek, O.L. Vrouw van de Zeven Smarten' and Graas (T.), 'Verloren gegane Lucas-Madonna's', pp. 12-26.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Wüstefeld, 'Delftse handschriftenproductie', pp. 9-42.

¹⁶¹ Leeds, University Library, Brotherton ms. 7 (ca. 1490), f. 142v.

¹⁶² Leiden is referred to as a center of the devotion in Leeu's handbook from 1492 (Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', p. 264, n. 43). Cf. Brinkman, *Dichten uit liefde*, 84-89.

¹⁶³ Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary', p. 264, n. 43; Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratus (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Weeen*, pp. 120-123.

at the Church of St. Hippolyte. This is not unlikely, because Mettenye held the position of canon in the Chapter of the Church of St. Donatius in Bruges where Frans Busleiden was provost.¹⁶⁴ Delft soon became a place where the devotion to the Seven Sorrows was propagated through the young medium of the printing press. One of the organizers of the printing of religious booklets associated with the devotion was Michael Franciscus de Insulis.¹⁶⁵ The growth of the devotion in Delft might have been stimulated by contacts between the Collaciebroeders of Gouda, the Brethren of the Common Life and the printers of Delft. The Brethren of the Common Life at Delft were familiar with the devotion at an early date. The brothers of the Delft chapter house Hieronymusdal were paid two shillings in 1495 to place a text about the Seven Sorrows in an existing manuscript.¹⁶⁶ The decision to look to Delft and its powerful printing workshops, moreover, suggests that even before 1500 there must have already existed a fairly large local or regional audience eager to obtain this type of religious literature.

Through the pastoral activities of Dirck Adamszoon van der Burch (Theodoricus Adam, Theodorus Aemsonius, Dierick Adamsz or Aemsz, d. 1531) and owing to the miracles which started taking place around 1500, Delft grew into one of the main sites of the cult in Holland. Van der Burch was doctor of canon law and came from a patrician family. Being the vice-curate of the Church of St. Hippolyte, he was probably also chaplain of the church's altar of the Seven Sorrows.¹⁶⁷ Van der Burch served additionally as priest at the Delft Beguinage (*Bagijnhof*)¹⁶⁸ and in

¹⁶⁴ Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 46.

¹⁶⁵ Verhoeven, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

¹⁶⁶ Wüstefeld, 'Delftse handschriftenproductie', p. 35.

¹⁶⁷ Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 58-59; Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, vol. i, p. 149 (marginal note), seems to regard the title of 'meester' as a customary title bestowed on priests rather than as an academic title. The altar (or chapel) is described by Van Bleyswijck (based on information supplied by Michael Vosmeer): 'Elders was noch een ander Capelle die de naem was voerende van onser Liever Vrouwe Capelle van der seven ween, in welcke (als de selfde auteur [i.e. Vosmeer] getuyght) men ingetreden zynde aen de rechterhandt een Pylaer vont / waer aen het teycken des Cruys Christi was hangende / apparentelijck tegen over het gesicht van dese weenende Lieve Vrouwe / als haer droevighe reflectie op het selfde nemende', *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, vol. i, p. 148. The liturgical space of the chapel was therefore arranged to include both the Crucifixion and the mourning Virgin Mary, which in itself provides yet another argument for the naturally close convergence of Passion-centered worship and the devotion of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary.

¹⁶⁸ An altar and 'costly image' of the Seven Sorrows at the Delft *begijnhof* are mentioned by Van Heussen, *Oudheden en gestichten van Delft en Delfland*, p. 203.

the village of 't Woudt near Delft.¹⁶⁹ On Good Friday 1503, the cult was officially introduced in Delft to commemorate 'the Passion of our dear Lord Jesus Christ and the Seven Sorrows and anguished compassion of his all-sorrowful mother and always Virgin Mary' ('ter passie ons liefs heeren Jhesu Christi ende der zeven ween ende bange medelijden zijnre alrebedroefte moeder ende altois maget Marie').¹⁷⁰ Celebrations were designated to be held on various dates. Since 1514 the *festum de doloribus* (lasting a full octave) was celebrated on the third Sunday after Easter, *Dominica Jubilate*, just after the feast of *Compassio Mariae*. The feast of the miracles ('hoichtijt der miraculen') was even longer, as it lasted from St. Matthew's day (21 September) till 3 October, with a procession to be held on St. Bavo's day (the day of the consecration of the altar dedicated to the Seven Sorrows).¹⁷¹ In 1515 Margaret of Austria visited Delft, where she displayed great interest in the devotion. After listening to Holy Mass the archduchess conversed with Dirck Adamszoon and gave as a *votum* to the Church of St. Hippolyte a golden heart 'weighing twenty pounds' ('wegende twintich pond').¹⁷² Perhaps as a consequence of this visit Dirck Adamszoon was rewarded with the honorary position of chaplain to Charles V.¹⁷³

But of the most interest to contemporaries were the miracles. In Delft Margaret of Austria visited Anna, a nun at the Delft convent of St. Clara. The narrative of Anna's healing and the ensuing events (a vision of the Virgin Mary) was the subject of the longest and most complex *miraculum* written by Dirck Adamszoon (undated, after August 1511 and before July 1514).¹⁷⁴ An investigation into this miracle was carried out by an ecclesiastic commission headed by Jacob de Ridder, titular bishop of Hebron.¹⁷⁵ An analysis of Dirck Adamszoon's narrative about Anna can

¹⁶⁹ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 97 n. 106.

¹⁷⁰ Cited after Oosterbaan, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

¹⁷¹ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stadt Delft*, p. 150-151; Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 252. For dates when the celebrations and procession (Ommegang) of the Seven Sorrows was held see Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 47.

¹⁷² Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, p. 156.

¹⁷³ Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 59 and p. 326 n. 117.

¹⁷⁴ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, pp. 142-150. Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, pp. 275-288.

¹⁷⁵ Cf. Verhoeven, *op. cit.*, p. 61. A different (though not necessarily contradictory) version of the narrative of Anna, where the sorrows of the Virgin Mary under the cross were especially recommended for worship, was recorded by Michael Vosmeer in a manuscript miracle book of the Church of St. Hippolyte (Rijksarchief Utrecht, Archief

be very revealing from a literary-historical point of view. It offers valuable insights into the processes by which miraculous events in the Netherlands (specifically, healing and a religious vision), recorded by first-hand witnesses, eventually found their way into early-16th century vernacular literature: *miracula*, sermons and miracle-books.¹⁷⁶

The *miraculum* begins in a conventional way with a description of the ailment; an ineffectual attempt to find a cure is then followed by a true act of healing. Anna had been suffering from kidney-stones. Although 'the entire convent had turned [in prayer] to the Passion of Our Lord and to the sorrows of the Virgin' ('tot de passie ons Heeren / ende tot de maechdelijcke Ween'), the pain only increased, so that Anna felt as though she was about to die.¹⁷⁷ However, when Anna turned to Christ through the intercession of His sorrowful Mother ('soo heeft sy aengheeroepen de Maeghdelijcke smerten / dat de aldergoedertierenste Maget soude believen van haren almachtighen sone te ververven dat hy haer van soo groote pijn ontslaen wilde / indient haer salich was'), she was relieved of the pain. However, as a matter of fact Anna had not yet been restored to the fullness of health. During the following days the nun pleaded with the Virgin Mary to heal her of a troubling 'anxiety of the heart' ('benautheit des herten'). As it turned out, Anna became aware that, paradoxically, she had felt *better* being ill than being healthy, for the state of physical well-being, she believed, could actually diminish her chances of meriting salvation.¹⁷⁸ This emotional anxiety about the prospects of salvation was for Anna no less painful and worrying than the physical disease from which she had been suffering.¹⁷⁹

Oudbischooppelijke Clerezie, inv. nr 453, fol. 10r-13r). A modern edition of the relevant part of Vosmeer's manuscript, together with a detailed textual analysis, is provided by Verhoeven, *op. cit.*, pp. 206-209. This version, different from the one noted down by Dirck Adamszoon, was conveyed in Vosmeer's posthumous *Diva Virgo et Crux Salutaris Delfica* (1629). A vernacular translation based on Vosmeer's account of this miracle in *Diva Virgo et Crux Salutaris Delfica* can be found in Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stadt Delft*, pp. 148-149 and Boitet, *Beschryving van Delft*, pp. 153-155 (the latter, being a later version, is not mentioned by Verhoeven).

¹⁷⁶ A bilingual (Latin and Dutch) diplomatic edition of this *miraculum* is available in Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, pp. 283-288.

¹⁷⁷ Van Coudenberghe, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, pp. 143-144.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 353, n. 55, correcting Stratius' translation of 'diminutionem'.

¹⁷⁹ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, p. 145.

In answer to Anna's prayers, the sorrowful Virgin Mary appeared to her in the following vision (as recorded by Dirck Adamszoon):

Als sy was dus biddende was / heeft haer de alderbedruckte Mo[e]der / sonder haren sone verthoont. De welcke als Anna ghesien hadde / in haer selven bevreest / peynsde aldus. Is dit de Moeder waer is haer kint: ende midts dit is de Moeder een luttel vande ooghen des geens die dit vraeghe verdwenen / maer een poosken tijts daer naer is wederom verschenen / hebbende haren sone / die sijn hooft in haren rechten arm boochde / ende zijne slincke hant op haer hooft liet liggen. Aensiende oock Annam met een treurich aenschijn / ende segghende: en weet ghy niet dat ick ende mijnen sone uwe salicheyt seer begheiren: dit gheseyt zijnde / is sy van alle benautheyt ontslaghen.¹⁸⁰

As she was thus praying the sorrowful Mother appeared to her without her son. As soon as Anna saw her, she was fearful and thought, 'if this is the Mother [of God], then where is the child?', and soon afterwards the Mother vanished from the sight of [Anna] but re-appeared a while later, with her son [Jesus], who leaned his head on her right arm and with his left hand touched her head. [The Virgin Mary] looked at Anna with a sorrowful countenance and said, 'Do you not know that I and my son always desire your salvation?' With these words [Anna] was released of all anxiety.

The double (physical and spiritual) nature of the act of healing made this narrative far more complex than most other *miracula*. Furthermore, Anna's vision, which had been declared authentic by the Church commission headed by bishop Jacob de Ridder in 1510, was not without new mysteries of its own. Anna was troubled by the fact that Jesus, whom she saw in the vision, seemed to look away from her (and towards His Mother). The nun therefore concluded that Jesus thought her to be 'unworthy because of her sins' ('sy vreesde dat sy sulcx om haere sonden onweerdich was'). As Anna learned, however, the true reason for this was different and only known to the Virgin Mary.¹⁸¹

The details of the vision suggest that Anna saw the Virgin Mary and Jesus in postures resembling the figure of a *pieta*. The Virgin Mary had 'long fair hair, falling down' ('haer hayr was lanck / hanghende / blond'), and she was 'clad in a blue mantle, woven with gold and bright' ('eenen blauwen mantel / met gout ghevlochten / ende doorluchtich'). Anna saw that Jesus was in a recumbent posture next to the Virgin Mary (this, incidentally, suggested why Jesus' head might have been turned *away from*

¹⁸⁰ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 145-146.

¹⁸¹ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 146.

the nun), and His five wounds were visibly bleeding ('hadde de vijf wonden / ende die bloedich').¹⁸²

The Virgin Mary had an important message for Anna. The sense of this message was that the miracles were a special manner in which the Mother of God and Jesus wished to be worshipped in the Netherlands ('De Moeder Gods heefter oock by gheseyt: ghy sult weten dat ick ende mijnen sone begheiren in dese contreye door Miraculen geeert te worden'). This was, in the first place, an answer to the doubts expressed by Anna as to the spiritual sense of her healing. The answer showed that individual miracles had, indeed, great significance, for they were the will of Christ and His Mother. Furthermore, the miracles of the Seven Sorrows had become a significant part of the Catholic identity of the Netherlands at the threshold of the early modern period. Cultivating the memory of the miracles was therefore synonymous with satisfying the will of God. This fact had tremendous significance for Anna. The remainder of the narrative is taken up by Anna's attempts to realize the Virgin Mary's wish in the fullest possible way:

Sy heeft een ende anderwerf by haer selven ghedocht / hoe dit wonderlijck Miraekel ten voorschijn brenghen soude / ende soude doen comen tot aller menschen kennisse ter eeren Gods / ende tot lof zijnder alderzuiverste Moeder Maria. Want sy was ghedachtich / dat de Maghet daer in wilde gheert zijn.¹⁸³

She thought for awhile in private how she should bring this wonderful miracle to the attention of all people for the glory of God and in praise of His most pure Mother Mary. Because she was aware that the Virgin desired to be worshipped in this way.

When Anna eventually revealed to the abbess of St. Clara's the miracle of her healing, she decided, however, to omit one significant detail: the vision. The abbess, concerned that the miracle be made known, charged the nun to write down the events as they happened. Again, Anna only partially fulfilled that request:

So dan als sy hadde begonnen te schrijven / soo heeft sy voor haer ghenomen / te verswijghen d'openbaringhe die haer gheschiet was. Maer / God anders willende / heeft de selve onwetelijck geschreven: ende terstont daer naer siende / dat sy ooc niet willende d'openbaeringhe gheschreven hadde / nemende penne ende inckt / dede haer beste om de selve wt te royen / maer als sy niet en conste nemende den incthoren heeft allen den inct met-

¹⁸² Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 146-147.

¹⁸³ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 147.

ten coker daer over wt ghestort / ende seer neerstelijck haer gepijnt om dit wt te vagen. Dit voorseyde briefken gevonden zijnde door een devote Maghet / Clara ghenoept / die onlancx te voren in d'ordre ontfanghen was / sy en heeft eerst niet een letter ghesien van dit visioen. Maer als sy daer naerstelijcker op sach / so docht haer dat de letteren haer selven ophieffen / ende leselijcke maeckten. Soo dan sy heeftet perfecktelyck ghelesen. Anna dit horende / dede haer beste om dit gheschrift haer wt den handen te krijghen: maer soo Clara wederstant bode / soo is een stuck daer af in haer handen ghebleven.¹⁸⁴

When she [i.e. Anna] started writing, it was her intention to remain silent about the vision that she had seen. But God willed it to be otherwise; she wrote about it unbeknownst to herself. She recognized instantly that she had written about the revelation without ever having wanted to do so, therefore she tried with pen and ink to blot out what she had written; when this failed, she took the inkpot and spilled the ink all over the paper, sparing no effort to obliterate the writing. A pious maiden called Clara, who had only just been admitted to the order, found this piece of paper; at first she was unable to read the vision. But when she looked attentively, it seemed to her that the letters raised themselves and became legible, so that she was perfectly able to read the text. Anna, hearing this, tried to snatch it away from Clara, but Clara resisted, and a piece remained in her hands.

The novice, Clara, informed the mother superior about the event. A delegation of nuns then went to Anna with the aim of persuading her to reveal the vision 'not for the sake of vanity but to make known the glory of God' ('niet tot ydele glorie / maer om Gods lof condich te maken').¹⁸⁵ Immediately, Anna was seized with a great pain 'in the place where the stone had been' and in her heart. On midnight of the third night, as she lay suffering, the pain disappeared in answer to her prayers. Anna understood that it had been a sign that the Virgin Mary had wished her to reveal the full extent of the vision.

Dirck Adamszoon's narrative about Anna makes it clear that the nun and other female religious witnesses were directly involved in writing down the text of the miracle but it is not known what steps were eventually taken to ensure that it was propagated among the faithful. However, it is known from other sources that the miracle at St. Clara's convent was propagated among a wider public (including inhabitants of Delft and pilgrims) through the medium of sermons. Homilies were also used to publicize the miracle of an image of the Virgin Mary of the Seven Sorrows

¹⁸⁴ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 148.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

found in the ground by a peasant on the eve of St. Bavo's.¹⁸⁶ Both of these miraculous events were explicitly recommended as subject-matter for homilies in a document from 1514 ('[...] mede een mirakel verclaren ende seggen ende beysondere int hoichtijt van miraculen dat mirakel van Sinte Claren tot Nazareth ende van dat beeldekin dat gevonden wairt op Sinte Bavenavont mit die pairden').¹⁸⁷

Other than the miracle-books and homilies, the narrative of Anna does not seem to have been transmitted through genres such as the 'Marian legend' (*Marialegende*). Perhaps the best known example of such a (dramatized) late-medieval Dutch 'Marian legend' was *Beatrijs*, the story of a repentant nun, the plot of which was modeled on a tale in *Libri octo miraculorum* by the Cistercian Caesarius of Heisterbach (c. 1180-1240).¹⁸⁸ A collection of similar miracle narratives, *Miraculen Onser Liever Vrouwen* (though lacking the *Beatrijs*), came off the press at Delft between 1477 and 1479.¹⁸⁹ The Delft miracles of the Seven Sorrows devotion, however, were factual accounts of recent events, and as such they were categorized as a separate genre.

When the first miracles at Abbenbroek were being investigated by bishop David of Burgundy, dramatized information about the devotion of the Seven Sorrows was already being communicated to believers through the literary medium of rhetorical plays. A primeur for this kind of performance came on March 25, 1494, when a play written by Hendrik Maes, a canon from Zeeland, was staged before Philip the Fair at Mechelen.¹⁹⁰ Allegorical plays of this kind, 'made after the manner of *esbattementen*' ('battamentsgewijs'),¹⁹¹ involved a dialogue between the

¹⁸⁶ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 61-62.

¹⁸⁷ Cited in Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 60 and p. 323, n. 62. The source is Delft, Gemeentearchief, Archief Hippolytuskerk inv. nr 26; a modern edition of this document can be found in Oosterbaan, 'De zeven smarten van Maria te Delft', pp. 121-125.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. Lulofs, 'Inleiding' in: *Beatrijs*, pp. 7-24. The most famous manuscript of *Beatrijs* is The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 76 E 5, fol. 47v-54v (rhymed version). A different (prose) version can be found, for instance, in The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 70 H 42. For a study of vernacular Dutch Marian legends see De Vooys, *Middel-Nederlandsche legenden en exempelen* and *Onser liever vrouwen miraculen*, vols. 1 and 2.

¹⁸⁹ *Miraculen Onser Liever Vrouwen* [Delft: Jacob Jacobsz van der Meer, Mauricius Yemantsz, between 10 Januari 1477 and 20 November 1479] (ILC 1601). For a comparison of this edition to the manuscript texts, see Honigh, *Middel-Nederlandsche Maria-legenden*, pp. 457-518.

¹⁹⁰ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, pp. 219-223. Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 267.

¹⁹¹ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 220.

'spirits' opposing and propagating the devotion, which ended in a victory of the latter. By all accounts Philip the Fair was so carried away by the performance that a second staging was held on 3 April of the same year.¹⁹² A play of this kind was put on at Leiden (4 July 1494) as *Van die vij ween onse lieuer vrouwe*.¹⁹³ Other plays were written by two hugely popular Brussels *rederijkers*, Jan Smeken and Jan Pertchevael, the itinerant creators of a series of learned texts in the tradition of Christian-Aristotelian civic ethics.¹⁹⁴ Brussels was, after all, the town where a yearly spectacle on the 'joys of the Virgin Mary' (*bliscappen van Maria*) had been performed since 1448.¹⁹⁵ It is very likely that a vernacular play of this type on the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary was staged in Delft in 1504, soon after the devotion was inaugurated in the town.¹⁹⁶

Paradoxically, Jan van Coudenberghe was himself rather critical of the role that secular performance had to play in propagating the devotion of the Seven Sorrows. According to him, the plays were evidence of a lack of adequate pastoral care, and he cited approvingly the advice of 'learned lay and religious persons', who eventually recommended that the devotion of the Seven Sorrows be the subject of homilies rather than of profane theatrical performances ('Geleerde mannen / sowel Religieusen als andere / siende dese vertooningen / waren van advijs datet beter soude betamen de droefheden der Maghet inde Kercken ende Godshuysen te prediken / dan deselve in dusdanighe schouplaetsen wt te roepen').¹⁹⁷ Jan van Coudenberghe displayed a keen pastoral awareness of the difference between a religious service (the Holy Mass, a sermon) and a secular gathering (*schouplaets*, i.e., a theatre), a distinction that would only grow stronger after the Tridentine reform.¹⁹⁸ An unwillingness to

¹⁹² Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 219-223. Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin', p. 267.

¹⁹³ Brinkman, *Dichten uit liefde*, p. 84.

¹⁹⁴ Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, pp. 220. For Smeken and Pertchevael see e.g. Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, pp. 315-318.

¹⁹⁵ Only the plays on the first and last joy of the Virgin Mary, *Eerste bliscap van Maria* and *Die sevense bliscap van Maria*, have survived. See Beuken, 'Inleiding' in: *Die eerste Bliscap van Maria*, pp. 5-51, and Dąbrówka, *Teatr i sacrum w średniowieczu*, p. 504. For the staging of this play see e.g. Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, p. 103.

¹⁹⁶ Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *De Delftse rederijkers*, p. 12.

¹⁹⁷ Coudenberghe, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven ween*, p. 224.

¹⁹⁸ When the authors of post-Tridentine catechisms published in the Netherlands criticized the undignified behaviors of church-goers, such behaviors were condemned as more suitable for the theatre than for a church service. This points to a keen sense

mix the secular and sacred might be the reason why plays about the Seven Sorrows were staged in Delft no more than once. Jan van Coudenberghe's critical reaction to rhetorical religious drama is a sign of a wider rift between the makers of devotional literature and their supposed allies in the circles of the rhetoricians. Conversely, it signals the fact that rhetorical plays (and *rederijker* texts in general) cannot be treated as factual documents unequivocally revealing the intentions of the devotion's promoters.¹⁹⁹

of the difference between a religious environment and a theatrical performance. In this context the Catholic writer Columbanus Vrancx (1608) referred explicitly to the *esbattementen* organized by Netherlandish chambers of rhetoric: 'Catholics who attend the divine service of the highest Sacrifice of Holy Mass in church, where the true living God is physically present, sit there without any awe or reverence, as though they were viewing an *esbattement* or a play of the rhetoricians, which is full of idleness' ('Catholijcke Menschen / die inde Kercke ende onder den Goddelicken Dienst van dat alder hoochste Sacrificie der Missen / daer den waerachtighen en leuenden God Lichamelick is tegenwoordich / zitten zonder eenighe vreese en reuerentie / al oft sy zaten in een Camer oft Batement-Spel dat vol ydelheyt is'), Vrancx, *Een schoon deuoot kerck boecxken*, p. 15.

¹⁹⁹ One example can be given to demonstrate that one should exercise caution when interpreting rhetorical verse, whose function and provenance is uncertain, as objective evidence of the intentions of Jan van Coudenberghe or the devotees of the Cult of the Seven Sorrows.

Anne-Laure van Bruaene argued, for example, that '[...] The devotion of the Seven Sorrows very cleverly played upon the popular sentiments of war-weariness and Burgundian patriotism by encouraging worshippers to fuse the image of the Virgin Mary mourning for her only son with that of the late duchess Mary of Burgundy.' (it. mine – M.P.) (Van Bruaene 'The Habsburg Theatre State', p. 138). In the footnote (*op. cit.*, n. 23, p. 138), Van Bruaene refers to Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, pp. 67-68. There, the same assertion is made, but there it is backed up solely by an 'ambiguous play' ('dubbelzinnige spel') with words from a *rederijker* verse about Philip the Fair's religious attitudes published under the name of Hendrik Maes between 1506-1524 (Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, p. 281, n. 139). The rather broad dating of this verse should be a warning, for Erasmian (and later Lutheran) criticism of medieval devotion rather quickly entered rhetorical poetry (and often previously orthodox circles of the clergy) from the end of the second decade of the 16th century. The undoubtedly profane verse in question (where the young prince's devotion to the Virgin Mary was supposedly identified with his attachment to Mary of Burgundy) might have even been a humanist or early Protestant satire on religious piety. One can conclude that where the theological ramifications of religious worship are no longer considered, a 'historical reconstruction of emotions' (Van Bruaene, *Om beters wille*, p. 281) does not have unrestricted validity.

An assertion almost identical to the one in Van Bruaene 'The Habsburg Theatre State', p. 138 is made in Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin': 'The fact is that the devotion encouraged worshippers to fuse the image of the sorrowing Virgin Mary with that of the late duchess and, thereby, identify with both. The Burgundian heiress Mary had not only suffered a sorrowful death herself, but her only son Philip had endured ordeals such as being left motherless at the age of three and a half,

While the support of Jan van Coudenberghe and his circle for the dramatic media was not unconditional, he was favorably disposed to Latin religious poetry. A noted Latin poet who acted as one of the advocates (*zelateurs*) of the devotion was Aegidius Delfus (Gillis van Delft; Delphus, d. 1524). This cosmopolitan humanist theologian who is believed to have been born in Delft supplies another link between this town and the circles of south-Netherlandish promoters of the devotion.²⁰⁰ Aegidius Delfus (Delphus) is mentioned twice in Jan van Coudenberghe's *Ortus, progressus et impedimenta*. First, Delfus is cited as the author of several Latin poems admonishing towards Christian life ('tot vermaninghe') with a reference to the Sorrows of the Virgin Mary, written for Philip the Fair before his departure to Spain in 1502.²⁰¹ Paradoxically, following his return to the Low Countries around 1501 after a lengthy stay in Paris, where he taught philosophy and theology, Delfus actually supported the clergy of Flanders in their refusal to pay a subsidy to Philip for the very same journey, so it cannot be said that he was an unconditional Burgundian loyalist.²⁰² Jan van Coudenberghe referred to Delfus again as the author of 'a very good sermon' ('een seer goet sermoon') delivered during a special Mass celebrated on the occasion of the pardon granted to the confraternity by Pope Leo X on 28 April 1517.²⁰³

Delfus was an accomplished Latin poet, whose *Opuscula in laudem dive virginis Marie* appeared in Delft (1505).²⁰⁴ It is not known whether

being held hostage for a couple of years by the Ghent rebels and seeing his territories divided by rebellion and civil strife' (p. 262). Here, again, this assertion is not backed up by the contents of any of the treatises associated with the Seven Sorrows devotion or, in fact, any other period documents (not even the verse of Hendrik Maes). On the contrary, it can be argued that the tragic death of the pious Mary of Burgundy, who fell from a horse, remained perfectly distinct in the sensibility of late-medieval Christians from the sacred and miraculous (but not at all tragic) event of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. For a document on early-modern Christian religious consciousness in the Netherlands with regard to the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, see e.g. Sasbout, *Devote ende seer gheestelijcke Sermoenen*, fol. 188v-189r. *passim*.

²⁰⁰ Cf. Bleyswijk, *Beschryvinge der stadt Delft*, vol. ii, p. 755; Van Heussen, *Oudheden en gestichten van Delft*, p. 239; 'Aegidius (Petrus)' in: NBW, vol. i, p. 99. However, Farge refers only to the diocese of Utrecht as the birthplace of Delfus, cf. 'Gillis van Delft' in *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, vol. i, p. 382.

²⁰¹ Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weeen*, p. 235.

²⁰² Farge, 'Gillis van Delft' in: Bietenholz, Deutscher, *Contemporaries of Erasmus*, vol. i, pp. 382-383.

²⁰³ Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weeen*, p. 259.

²⁰⁴ Delphus, Aegidius, *Opuscula in laudem dive virginis Marie*, [Delft: Cornelis Corneliszoon? c. 1505] (NK 4501).

this edition contained the poem referred to by Jan van Coudenberghe but it is quite likely, as the theme of the volume, dedicated to bishop Frederic of Baden, was the praise of the Virgin Mary. Scholars have speculated on the relation of Delfus to Erasmus. P.G. Allen, the editor of Erasmus' *Epistolae*, believed that the Parisian poet 'Delius Volscus', whom Erasmus sharply criticized and with whom he engaged in a 'poetic battle', was actually Delfus. This hypothesis derived further support from the fact that one of Delfus' poems from the *Opuscula...*, the ode 'In vitam dive virginis Marie carmen sapphicum', was dedicated to Erasmus. According to C. H. Miller and H. Vredevelde, the 'Paeon divae Mariae, atque de incarnatione verbi' (likewise a Sapphic ode) written by Erasmus in the spring of 1499 should be seen as a reaction to Delfus' poem about the life of the Virgin Mary.²⁰⁵

Although the devotion to the Virgin Mary of the Seven Sorrows received far less publicity through the medium of literature after the death of Jan van Coudenberghe (1521) than in the period preceding that date, its practice continued to be maintained until the Dutch Revolt, and in fact even longer, among the urban middle class and in humanist circles in Delft. In 1529 one Katrijn Ewoutsdochter donated 200 Rhenish guilders (a considerable fortune) for Holy Mass to be said in perpetuity by twenty-one priests before the altar of the Seven Sorrows on 2 October of each year.²⁰⁶ In the mid-1560s the humanist rector of St. Agatha's convent in Delft, Cornelius Musius, composed a Latin office for the Seven Sorrows which was to be chanted in the choir of the Church of St. Hippolyte. This office was approved by Nicholaes van Nieuwland, bishop of Haarlem (1562-1572?). Special pardons were attached to pious participation in singing this office.²⁰⁷ Finally, in the first days of July 1572, the nineteen Catholic priests and friars known as the Martyrs of Gorcum (see below, **Chapter 5.1.**), forced by their persecutors to chant litanies under duress, sang the small office to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary (*Officium Parvum de Septem Doloribus B.V.M.*) while awaiting execution in the town of Brill (Den Briel):

Daer heeft mense weder-om doen drij-maels rondts-om de galghe gaen /
ende onder-tusschen de Litanien vande Heylighen ende sommige andere
lof-sanghen singhen / ende den omme-gangh ghedaen zijnde / ter aerden
knielende eenige louen ter eeren vande Maghet ende Moeder Godts sing-
hen. Inde welcke als sy ghecomen waren tot de Oratie oft ghebedt / daer

²⁰⁵ Erasmus, *Poems* (ed. by Miller, Vredevelde), pp. 646-648.

²⁰⁶ Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 47.

²⁰⁷ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 257.

men opde maniere der H. Kercken al-sulcke louen mede sluyt (die-men Collecten noemt) soo hebben sy ghesweghen / om dat / dencke ick / midts hunne oodt--moedigheyt / niemant en dorste bestaen te doen t'ghene dat ghemeynelijck ghedaen wordt vanden Priester die de alder-weerdighste is. Maer als sy met dreyghementen ghepraemt wierden vande ghene die daer by stonden / dat sy oock de Collecte soudē singhen / soo heeft H. Gomaert van Duynen / een oudt-moedigh Priester / vol vanden yuer Godts / niet connende ghelijden dat dit leste eynde soude ontbreken aen sulcken fraeyen werck / sijn stemme luyde op-gheheuen / ende ghelijck hy dickwils in 't auondt-lof plagh te doen / heeft t' ghebedt der H. Kercken vol-comelijck ende sonder lippen uyt-gelesen / segghende: *Oremus. Interueniat pro nobis, &c.* Dat is gheseght: Laet ons bidden. O Heere Godt / laet doch veur ons ten besten spreken by uwe goedertierentheydt nu en inde ure onser doot / de glorieuse maghet Maria u moeder / wiens aller-heylichste siele inde ure wuer ghebenedijder passien ende bitter doot het sweerd des droefheydts is deur-ghepasseert / die daer leuende regneret inde eeuwighe eeuwigheden. Ende alle d' ander Martelaers hebben gheandtwoordt / *Amen*.²⁰⁸

*Then they were led three times around the gallows, and forced to sing the Litanies of the saints and some other hymns; then, this procession being ended, [they were forced] to kneel on the ground and sing in praise of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. When they had come to the Oration or prayer with which all such hymns (called the Collect) are concluded in the liturgy of the Church, they fell silent, because (in my opinion) in their humility none dared to say the words that are commonly the part of the priest who has the highest office. But when they were urged on with threats of violence by their captors to sing the Collect, St. Gomaert van Duynen, an old priest filled with the zeal of God, unwilling to suffer any part of such a fine work to be omitted, raised up his voice and intoned clearly and perfectly, just as he often did at evensong, the prayer of the Church, saying: Oremus. Interveniāt pro nobis, etc. Which means: let us pray, O Lord Jesus Christ, we beseech Thee that the blessed Virgin Mary, Thy Mother, whose most holy soul was pierced by the sword of sorrow in the hour of Thy Passion [emphasis mine – MP], may appeal for us to Thy clemency, now and at the hour of our death. Through Thee, Jesus Christ, Savior of the world, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit, livest and reignest, forever and ever. And all other Martyrs answered: Amen.*²⁰⁹

The devotional and literary networks which helped to transmit the cult of the Seven Sorrows in Delft did not cease to exist with the on-

²⁰⁸ Estius, *Waerachtighe historie van de martelaers van Gorcum*, pp. 171-172.

²⁰⁹ The English translation of the relevant passage of the Little Office of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows is based on the version in *Behold Thy Mother*, p. 194.

set of the Dutch Revolt. Exchanging information with the *émigré* circles of Delft Catholics living in Cologne, Michael Vosmeer, brother of the later Apostolic Vicar Sasbout Vosmeer, consigned to paper his own version of the miracle of Anna (now called Agnietken) together with seven vernacular prayers to be said while meditating on the Sorrows.²¹⁰ The sorrows of the Virgin Mary (though not explicitly seven in number) are the subject of Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele's song 'Golgotha. Op Goede-Vrijdag' ('Golgotha. On Good Friday') in *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Jesu Christi* (1628) written for a choir of *mulieres religiosae* in Delft.²¹¹ Other songbooks, not published in Delft, sustained this devotion in the northern Netherlands after 1572. An image of the Virgin Mary of the Seven Sorrows, her heart pierced by swords, adorned the title leaf of Johannes Jacobsz Stichter's *Passi, paesch, en pinxter-gezangen* ('Passion, Easter and Pentecost Songs'; Amsterdam: Gerardus van Bloemen, 1720). That songbook is merely one item on a long list of literature produced in conjunction with this devotion to this day both in the Netherlands and elsewhere.

The memory of the devotion and miracles continued to be cultivated in the southern Netherlands after the Dutch Revolt, although now a different motive was attached to their propagation. One of the explicitly-stated intentions Georges Colvenier had in reviving Van Coudenberghe's devotional treatises was to convert the now-Protestant people of Holland and Zeeland to the Catholic faith by reminding them of the miracles that had happened before the Reformation through the intercession of the Virgin Mary:

[...] dese dinghen veel connen helpen / tot bevestinghe des Catholijcken Gheloofs / teghen de ketters van onsen tijt / ende tegen de gene die van hunlieden in Nederlant verleyt sijn. Want aengesien dese Miraculen mees-tendeel geschiet sijn in Hollant ende Zeelant / laet de Hollanders ende Zeelanders nu gaen besien / oft binnen Abbenbroeck / Reymerswale / Delft / S'graven-Haghe deser ghelijcke dinghen gheschieden inde Kercken / die sy ontwijt ende gheschonden hebben.²¹²

[...] these things can be of help to support the Catholic religion against the heretics of our times, and against those in the Netherlands who have been

²¹⁰ Rijksarchief Utrecht, Archief Oud-Bisschoppelijke Clerezie inv. nr 453, cited by Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, pp. 206-210.

²¹¹ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Jesu Christi* (ed. Mensink), p. 220-222.

²¹² Van Coudenberghe, Colvenier, Stratius (transl.), *Onse L. Vrouwe der Seven Ween*, fol. +4r.

misled. For because these miracles mainly happened in Holland and Zeeland, may the Hollanders and Zeelanders now find out whether the similar things are happening in the churches that they had desecrated and profaned.

Colvenier's motive can be situated in the sphere of the persuasive literature of the Counter-Reformation, in which readers were urged to aspire to a Christian civil society, in which the truths of the Catholic religion (e.g. the reality of miracles) were acknowledged and respected.²¹³

2.7. CONCLUSIONS: THE LITERARY NETWORKS OF THE SEVEN SORROWS DEVOTION

It can now be stated with some certainty that the founding of the Confraternities of the Seven Sorrows occurred in circles of socially-involved priestly administrators imbued with the values of Christian-Aristotelian civil ethics. The confraternities were therefore 'politically' motivated only in the sense of an overarching concern for the moral and physical well-being of the citizens of the civil society (*polis*) of the Netherlands.

The survival of the devotion in Delft and elsewhere until long after the civil conflict of 1482-1492 (and under very different circumstances) shows that loyalty to the Burgundian dynasty could not have been its primary motivation. At the center of this devotion was an individual piety, which, far from glorifying monarchic authority at the expense of the individual, tended to accentuate the humility of every Christian (including the sovereign) in the face of the suffering of Christ and His Mother. The Confraternities of the Seven Sorrows were founded on egalitarian principles, and here, again, an indebtedness to Christian Aristotelian ethics may be found. The devotion situated the monarch and his court within the ranks of ordinary Christians worshipping the Virgin Mary for the sake of sorrows that had been caused, ultimately, by the sin and disobedience of all mankind. As Jan van Coudenberghe emphatically stated, no-one, least of all the court, should feel free of moral responsibility.

The local implementation of the cult in its perhaps most important center, Delft, did not display any evident non-religious motives, nor was

²¹³ This model of a Christian polity cannot be said to be 'political' in a narrow factional sense, because it is never reliant on pre-conditions of a non-religious ideological nature. In other words, it seeks its justification in religious terms only.

the cult there different in any significant way (apart from the vastly greater number of miracles) from the practices in other centers in the Netherlands. The usual careful legal procedures such as the verification of events by means of sworn depositions, later publicized through *miracula* literature, were followed in order to obtain authorization for the cult from the Church authorities.

The Seven Sorrows devotion normally combined a meditation on the Passion of Christ with the Sorrows of His Mother. The former was therefore not at variance with, but could actually be stimulated by, literary sources conveying existing devotions related to the Passion. The letters in *Miracula confraternitatis...* prove that such a blending of devotional themes was by no means characteristic only of Delft but it was actually sanctioned by Jan van Coudenberghe and his associates. The accounts of the miracles, which Jan van Coudenberghe recommended to Charles V, were concerned solely with the well-being of individuals and their relation to God. The publicizing of miracles was understood by the devotion's propagators (including Jan van Coudenberghe and Dirck Adamszoon) in strictly religious terms, as communicating the glory of the Virgin Mary and Her Son to the Christian faithful. This religious unity corresponded strictly to the Christian-Aristotelian ideal of a harmonious civic society familiar to the representatives of the urban elites. The actual experience of physical and spiritual healing within a Christian community, described in the *miracula*, was one of the concrete expressions of this vision of social harmony and well-being that the advocates of the devotion hoped to see realized through the intercession of the Virgin Mary.

A survey of the available primary sources has revealed that research into the Seven Sorrows devotion in the Netherlands should adequately discern the fundamental difference that existed between the early-modern reception of religious literature of the Seven Sorrows and the concurrent reception of *rederijker* texts. These latter were produced in the wake of the devotion but at times also diverged from it considerably. New elements, sometimes extraneous to the devotion itself, were added to rhetorical verse. As a result rhetorical literature may prove to be misleading when considered as objective evidence of the aims of the devotion's founders. Indeed, the legitimacy of rhetorical texts (especially plays) as a vehicle of religious instruction was thrown into doubt by Jan van Coudenberghe in his reflections on the cult's history.

With some caveats it can therefore be put forward that *rederijker* performances were, after all, not the most important literary medium in

spreading the devotion in the Netherlands.²¹⁴ Other literary networks, however, tend to be overshadowed by research into *rederijker* literature.²¹⁵ Even so, the literary networks comprising lay and religious producers and readers of *miracula* literature, vernacular Passion literature and Latin religious poetry were at least equally (if not more) effective than rhetoricians in distributing information about the Seven Sorrows devotion in the Netherlands both during and after the most widely studied period of c. 1480 to c. 1520.

²¹⁴ Specific exceptions can be made, for example the rhetorical play staged for Philip the Fair, but the cause-effect mechanism linking rhetorical literature and the activities of the confraternity has not yet been fully explained in every local context. For a well-researched local perspective on the link between *rhetorica* and the devotees of the Seven Sorrows in Leiden cf. Brinkman, *Dichten uit liefde*, pp. 86-87.

²¹⁵ The treatment of *miracula* by Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary' (2010) is marginal, whereas the Latin religious poetry of Aegidius Delfus – which Jan van Coudenberghe believed to be a considerably more important contribution to the activities of the confraternity – is not mentioned at all.

3. PRIESTS, SCHOLARS AND POETS. CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS LITERARY NETWORKS AND THEIR INFRASTRUCTURE IN DELFT FROM 1500 TILL THE BEGINNING OF THE DUTCH REVOLT

3.1. NEW IDENTITIES FOR HOLLAND AND DELFT: THE BATAVIAN MYTH AND THE ORACLE OF DELPHI

The first years of the 16th century saw the birth of the ‘Batavian myth’ in the Netherlands. This historical narrative cast the Hollanders, as well as the inhabitants of other northern provinces in the Netherlands, in the role of the descendants of the heroic and freedom-loving Batavians whose righteous rebellion against the Romans had been described by Tacitus.¹ The first early-modern author who identified the Dutch with the ancient Batavians was Erasmus. Most notably in his *Adagia*, Erasmus delivered a critique of Martial’s *auris Bataviae* (‘Batavian ear’ – a synonym of dull-wittedness), responding to it by developing a positive image of the Batavians based on the account by Tacitus. Very quickly the term ‘Batavian’, now in a neutral or positive sense, was adopted by European humanists as a name for the dwellers of the Low Countries. Raffaele Maffei used this name for the inhabitants of Holland in *Commentaria urbana* (1506).² Yet Erasmus was not alone in spreading the Batavian myth among the Dutch. Another Dutch humanist who treated the Hollanders as the descendants of the heroic Batavians was Cornelis Aurelius (Cornelis Geritsz or Gerytsz van Gouda; c. 1460-1531) in his

¹ Tacitus, *The Annals and the Histories*, pp. 514-561 (iv.13-iv.80) and pp. 570-576 (v.14-v.26).

² For the rise of the Batavian myth in the early-modern Netherlands around 1500 see esp. Bejczy, ‘Drie humanisten en een mythe’, pp. 467-483.

Defensorium lorae Batavinae and *Elucidarium scopulosarum questionum super Batavina regione et differentia* (both before 1510). Aurelius' version of the Batavian myth presented the Hollanders as the sole heirs of the Batavians. Meanwhile, a 'supra-regional' variant of the Batavian myth, differing from Aurelius' Holland-centric approach, was formulated by Gerard Geldenhouwer (1482-1542) in the *Lucubrationcula de Batavorum insula* (1510). Geldenhouwer's conviction that it was not only the Hollanders who were descended from the ancient Batavians, but also the inhabitants of the eastern provinces of the Netherlands such as Overijssel and Gelderland, was echoed by the anonymous author of *Cronijcke van Hollant Zeelant ende Vrieslant van alle gheschiedenissen int corte* (1538) – a vernacular history that would be commonly used as a schoolbook in the northern Netherlands during the 16th and 17th century.³

The 'Batavian myth' was the most important among a number of intellectual projects in which Dutch humanists tried to construct a new identity for their *patria* out of the conceptual buildingblocks provided by the prestigious historical and literary narratives of classical antiquity.⁴ On a local level the same questions of identity stimulated by humanist learning were being debated in Dutch cities. In the same decade when Aurelius and Geldenhouwer were carrying on their polemic about the ancient Batavians, Lucas Nerdenus advanced an original solution to the question of the civic identity of Delft. Lucas Nerdenus' *Inter Apollinem et Mercurium dialogus fabulosus de prima ciuitatis Delphorum apud Hollandos origine*,⁵ which came off the press of Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder (1518), was the first text printed in Delft which concerned the history and origins of the town as a subject in itself, albeit in mythologized form. In Nerdenus' dialogue, humanist scholarship and Christian piety reached a harmonious balance. First of all, Nerdenus celebrated Delft – whose name was Latinized as Delphi – as a worthy namesake of the ancient Delphi in Greece, a town famous for its temple and oracle

³ Tilmans, *Aurelius en de Divisiechroniek*, pp. 121-155; Bejczy, 'Drie humanisten en een mythe', pp. 467-483.

⁴ The building of new identities, alternative in many respects to those supplied by the Italian Renaissance, is a common feature of the 'northern Renaissance' not only in the Netherlands, but also in other countries of Europe, such as Poland. For the European parallels of the Batavian Myth (esp. the Sarmatian Myth in Poland) as the expression of the shared paradigm of a 'northern Renaissance' and for the limitations of such parallels see Borowski, *Iter Polono-Belgo-Hollandicum*, pp. 28-38.

⁵ Lucas Nerdenus, *Inter Apollinem et Mercurium dialogus fabulosus de prima ciuitatis Delphorum apud Hollandos origine*, Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder, [1 September?] 1517 (NK 1589). The Hague Koninklijke Bibliotheek pfl. 16.

of Apollo: 'Delphorum nomen a Delphico apolline originem trahet'.⁶ Referring to Apollo's patronage of the arts, Nerdenus eulogized Delft as a center of education where a full curriculum of instruction in the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric and logic), was provided at the Latin school.⁷ Most importantly, however, this new identity of Delft/Delphi could now be expressed not only in classical and mythological but also explicitly Christian terms. The ancient Greek Delphi was the site of an oracle where the Sibyl, a priestess of the god Apollo, foretold future events. The Sibylline prophecies, especially the one in Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, were widely interpreted by Christians as announcing the birth of Christ. This was no different in the Delft dialogue, although it was not a Sibyl but Apollo himself who spoke of the demise of paganism. The god foretold the coming of a new religion, Christianity, to the lands of the 'Belgians' along the coast of the 'Germanic Sea'. This idea, developed by Nerdenus, had further consequences for the civic identity of Delft. The ancient pagan temple of Delphi, Nerdenus argued, had been replaced by Delft, a town located in 'Batavia' ('apud Bathauos') and renowned for its two churches.⁸

In the margin of his dialogue Nerdenus invoked the role of the missionary St. Willibrord.⁹ This makes Nerdenus' work a very early example of a literary discourse in which St. Willibrord, a saint whose figure was popularized by the missionaries of the Counter-Reformation, played such a prominent role as a symbolic figure representing the Christian identity of the inhabitants of the Netherlands.¹⁰ It would not be exaggerated to see a common cultural thread linking Nerdenus' humanist publication and later expressions of Dutch Catholic identity fostered by the secret missionaries of the Roman Catholic Church after the Dutch Revolt, all the more so that Sasbout Vosmeer, the Vicar Apostolic (after 1572) who infused his clandestine pastoral activities with references to Saints Wil-

⁶ Nerdenus, *op. cit.*, fol. [11v]; The Delphic Sybil ('Sybilla Delphica', 'Pythia') is referred to on fol. [5v].

⁷ The quite detailed description of a model of humanist education in Nerdenus' text ('Schola apud Delphos') can be seen as evidence situating its author in the circle of the masters or pupils of the Latin school at Delft. Nerdenus, *op. cit.*, fol. [9v]-[10r].

⁸ Nerdenus, *op. cit.*, fol. [8r].

⁹ Nerdenus, *op. cit.*, fol. [9r].

¹⁰ For St. Willibrord in the Catholic literature of the Netherlands after 1572, see below, **Chapter 5.3.** and **7.2.**, and in Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, pp. 762-765; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, pp. 55-56. However, neither Rogier nor Parker make any mention of such earlier (i.e. pre-1572) manifestations of St. Willibrord as a focal figure for Catholic identity in the northern Netherlands.

librord and Boniface, came from Delft's regent circles and was, possibly, familiar with this kind of humanist literature.

While the mythological conventions of the text as a dialogue between the gods permitted numerous allusions to be made to the foreseen arrival of Christianity, the etching on the title-leaf brought this central theme a step further by presenting a layman praying the rosary before an image of the Virgin Mary with the Child Jesus.¹¹ Although the resemblance might be coincidental, this etching corresponded closely to the known descriptions of the miraculous figure of *Maria van Jesse*, a sculpture of the type *sedes sapientiae* displayed at the Church of St. Hippolyte.¹²

The sense of Nerdenus' dialogue about the origins and contemporary Christian identity of Delft cannot be grasped without referring to the analogous motif of the Sibyls (including the Apolline oracle at Delphi) as the classical counterparts of the Prophets of the Old Testament. The most prestigious classical source conveying this information was a passage in the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil announcing, in words attributed to the Sibyl of Cumae, the coming of a new Golden Age (*aurea aetas*); Christian authors, including the Church Fathers, believed that this prophecy foretold the coming of Christianity.¹³ Other sources readily available to medieval readers included the legends of the Tiburtine Sibyl who announced to emperor Octavian Augustus the coming of a powerful future king, later understood (by Christians) to be Christ. Versions of this legend were reported in the *Speculum humanae salvationis* and in Jacobus de Voragine's *Aurea legenda*.¹⁴ A brief reference to the Sibylline oracles may be found in the *vita* of Catherine of Alexandria in the *Aurea*

¹¹ The etching on the title leaf of Nerdenus' *Inter Apollinem et Mercurium dialogus fabulosus* offers compelling graphic evidence that the rosary devotion in Delft existed concurrently with the devotion to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary. This etching can be matched to the tradition of block print illustrations of the rosary devotion in the Netherlands and Germany which has been described (though not on this example) by Ringbom, 'Maria in sole and the Virgin of the Rosary', p. 329.

¹² *Maria Jesse*, an image of the type *sedes sapientiae*, is described by Vosmeer, *Diva virgo et crux salutaris Delphica*, p. 3. Cf. Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, pp. 240-242; Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 40.

¹³ The late-classical and medieval Christian interpretations of Virgil's Fourth Eclogue are treated, for instance, by Bourne, 'The Messianic prophecy in Virgil's Fourth Eclogue', pp. 390-400 and Smiley, 'Virgil – His Philosophic Background and his Relation to Christianity', pp. 660-675.

¹⁴ For a survey of the Sibylline tradition in medieval literature see Ringbom, 'The Delft Master's *Holy Family*', p. 184-185. The Cumaean Sibyl is also mentioned by St. Augustine in the context of the *aurea aetas* in *De civitate Dei*, X, 27.

legenda (here, cited after the Dutch text printed in Brussels by Wolfgang Hopyl in 1505):

[...] die meesters seiden dattet onmoghelic ware dat God mensche soude werden ende ooc gepassijt soude werden. Doe toende hem sinte katherina dat dit ooc heydenen voerseit hadden. Want plato seyt dat god al omtrent ront is ende gene dat Sibylla seit oec salich is die god die int hout hanget van bouen.¹⁵

[...] the scholars said that it was impossible for God to become human and to be martyred. Then St. Catherine proved to them that also the heathen had foretold it, because Plato said that God is round in shape, whereas the Sibyl said, 'blessed is the God hanged upon a tree'.

Another important source on the Sibylline oracles, St. Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (XVIII, 23), was frequently quoted in medieval encyclopedias, for example Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale*.¹⁶ Vincent of Beauvais (Vincentius Bellovancensis, c. 1190-1264), a Dominican, served as a tutor of the sons of Louis IX, king of France. His *Speculum historiale*, continued by Vincent's successors, served the Dutch poet Jacob van Maerlant as a source for his vernacular *Spiegel historiael* (c. 1300-1325, completed by Lodewijk van Velthem and Philip Utenbroecke).¹⁷

It is very likely that through these and similar sources the Sibyls entered the world of sacred art produced in Delft. The middle panel of a triptych (c. 1500-c. 1510) attributed to the Master of Delft showed the Virgin Mary, holding the infant Jesus, surrounded by a group comprising St. Joseph and several angels. The two sumptuously-clad women adoring the Virgin and Child in the foreground of the *hortus conclusus* were identified by S. Ringbom as the Sibyls.¹⁸ The figure on the left, believed by Ringbom to be the Cumaean Sibyl, seems to be speaking to the infant Jesus, while her hand points upward to a vision of the *Arma Christi*, the

¹⁵ Jacobus de Voragine, *Passionael. Winterstuc*, Brussels: Wolfgang Hopyl, 1505, fol. 30v.

¹⁶ Ringbom, 'The Delft Master's *Holy Family*', p. 184-185.

¹⁷ A number of copies of the *Speculum historiale* are preserved in Dutch libraries. The University Library, Utrecht, holds a copy of an incunable printed by Jacob Rusch at Strasbourg in 1473 (B fol 104 rariora). See no. 38, 'Vincentius Bellovancensis, *Speculum historiale*', Van der Horst et al. (ed.), *Handschriften en Oude Drukken van de Utrechtse Universiteitsbibliotheek*, pp. 102-103 (with information about Vincent of Beauvais and his importance for Dutch literature).

¹⁸ Master of Delft, 'Triptych with the Virgin and Child and saints', Rijksmuseum Amsterdam SK-A-3141. For a detailed iconological study of this painting see Ringbom, 'Vision and conversation', pp. 181-190.

instruments of the Passion. In the composition of the central panel of the triptych Ringbom recognized the iconography of Octavian and the Tiburtine Sibyl reported in the *Legenda Aurea* and *Speculum humanae salvationis* (the latter sometimes attributed to Vincent of Beauvais).¹⁹ The parallel motif of the Sibyls was therefore certainly not unknown among humanist and traditional scholastic authors in the Netherlands around the year 1500. Moreover, by the time Nerdens wrote *Inter Apollinem et Mercurium dialogus fabulosus*, this theme had already been explored in Latin verse by Erasmus. We can turn especially to his *Paeon divae Mariae, atque de incarnatione verbi*²⁰ and the prose *Paeon Virgini Matri* composed in early 1499 for Anna van Borssele. In both of these texts Erasmus alluded in terms reminiscent of Virgil's Fourth Eclogue to the Sibylline oracles believed to foretell the birth of Christ.²¹

Just as humanist literature was finding ever more readers in the Netherlands, in the mid-1560s the theme of the Sibyls was taken up by the Renaissance artist Maerten van Heemskerck and linked again to the Christian identity of Delft. On the outer wing of a larger altar (of which the remaining panels have been lost) Van Heemskerck presented the Erythraean Sibyl in a visionary landscape. The tower of the Church of St. Ursula, the Church of St. Hippolyte and the town hall in Delft were faintly visible in the distant background.²² In the 17th century, however, it was not the image of the Sibyl but a male portrait on the reverse that faced the viewer when this painting was displayed at the Delft town hall.²³ The inner side of the panel is namely taken up by an image of Saint Paul with the kneeling founder of the altar, 'Matelief Dammasz', who is generally thought to be Wilhelmus Dammasus Lindanus (1505-1588), a priest and author of Dutch and Latin religious literature. 'Mate-lief' is generally understood not as a proper name but as an *adagium* praising moderation (*te maten lief Dammasz* – 'the moderation-loving Dammasz'). Lindanus served as Vicar-General of Leeuwarden, Bishop of Roermond and papal attendant to Gregory XII in Rome.²⁴ In his capac-

¹⁹ Ringbom, 'Vision and conversation', pp. 184-185.

²⁰ In the *Paeon* Erasmus touched upon Virgil's authorship of the 'Messianic' Eclogue (vs. 69-76) and said that the birth of Christ will bring about a Golden Age (vs. 313-316). For a detailed textual analysis of the parallel motif of the *aurea aetas* in Erasmus' *Paeon divae Mariae* see Budzisz, *Biblia i tradycja antyczna*, p. 22.

²¹ Erasmus, *Poems* (ed. by Miller, Vredevelde), p. 647.

²² Maerten van Heemskerck, 'Sibylla Erythraea', Rijksmuseum Amsterdam SK-A-1910.

²³ Van Bleysswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 125.

²⁴ Harrison, *The Paintings of Maerten van Heemskerck*, p. 870.

ity as dean of the chapter at The Hague (since 1556) and ecclesiastic inquisitor during the troublesome decades preceding the Dutch Revolt²⁵ Lindanus would have had frequent contacts with priests residing in Delft (for instance, the pastor of the Old Church, Martinus Duncanus).²⁶ That Lindanus must have visited Delft can be inferred from the fact that it was there that he published his catechetic manual on the proper way of participating in Holy Mass, *Van den oprechten gods dienst der heyligher misse* (1565).²⁷ To this manual Lindanus added a brief treatise on confession, *Een cort bereytsel, ende lichte maniere om christelijcke te biechten*.²⁸ Further evidence of contacts with the circles of Catholic humanists in Delft can be supplied by Cornelius Musius' dedication to Lindanus of his volume of Latin verse, *Solitudo, sive vita solitaria laudata* (Antwerp: Christopher Plantin 1566). Lindanus' *approbatio* stands at the end of this volume.²⁹ It is interesting to note that the affinity with the Sibyls extended to such high-placed ecclesiastics like Lindanus and other members of his social-literary circle.

3.2. BETWEEN AFFIRMATION AND REJECTION: 'DELPHI' AND THE CATHOLIC IDENTITY OF DELFT AFTER THE DUTCH REVOLT

The theme of the Sibylline oracle of Apollo continued to affect the literary image of Delft for many decades after Nerdenus had published the *Dialogus*. It was, nevertheless, an essentially altered cultural context after the Reformation had taken hold in the northern Dutch provinces in

²⁵ Van der Aa, 'Lindanus, Wilhelmus' in *NBW*, vol. xi, pp. 460-461.

²⁶ Cf. Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, pp. 152-153.

²⁷ Wilhelmus Damasi Lindanus, *Van den oprechten gods dienst der heyligher misse*, Delft: Harman Schinkel, 1565 (TB 3128).

²⁸ Wilhelmus Damasi Lindanus, *Een cort bereytsel, ende lichte maniere om christelijcke te biechten*, Delft: Harman Schinkel, 1565 (TB 3128).

²⁹ Cornelius Musius, *Solitudo, sive vita solitaria laudata*, Antwerp: Christopher Plantin 1566. The verse on the page following the title leaf reads:

Wilhelmus Damasi Lindanus Dordracenus, lectori verae pietatis studioso.
Musas qui coluit pientiores,
Hanc vitae tibi practicen dicauit:
Quam si exercueris fide expiatus,
Certo hinc ad Superum domos migrabis.

1572. Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), Delft's most famous child prodigy, was eulogized as the 'oracle of Delphi' at the time of his studies in Leiden.³⁰ All the more frequently, however, the theme of Delphi and its oracle was exploited in a negative way. Protestant humanists of the late 16th and early 17th century tended to treat the analogy, established by Nerenus, between Delft and Delphi, almost without exception as an object of stern rebuke or a target of condescending satire. This had much to do with the overall Protestant rejection of the cultural model of the Renaissance which was regarded as no longer essential for the rebirth of humanity. The true path, for most 16th and 17th century Protestants, led through a return to the earliest state of Christianity and expressed itself in a counter-reaction against the spirit of cultural individualism that had been engendered by the Renaissance.³¹ On the scholarly side of this critique of Delft and Delphi by Protestant humanists, we find Hadrianus Junius' characterization of Delft in *Batavia* (1588), parenthesized by a rhetorical *correctio* that dismissed any suggestion that the town might owe its present-day identity to an ancient oracle:

Sequuntur Delphi, non illi Apollineo oraculo, sed Cerealis potus prima post Britannicum zythum laude, inclyti, et quidem tanto magis inclyti, quanto illi propter rei frivola, mendacis et vanae existimationem celebritate hominum magna floruerunt; at hi ex usu et commodo ad corporis alimoniam vitaeque ministeria necessario eam sua industria gloriam quaesiverunt, ut vix aliud poculum, quam quod Delphorum cortinis concoctum furerit passim expetatur, adeo ut vix alio exotico zytho bona Flandriae pars utatur, et cum Zelandia potior Hollandiae tractus: quae res ingens operaepretium cuitati et negotiationi momentum adfert, tot passim tabernatorum et cauponum millibus, ordini honestissimo coctorum ceruisiariorum (qui Reipub. ilius neruus est et columnen, et trientem ferme ciuitatis constituit obnoxijis et tantum non addictis nexisque.³²

The Dutch translation of *Batavia* by Godefroy Boot (Delft: J.A. Cloeting, 1609) likewise rejected any reference to the Delphic oracle as a false identity:

Volght nu *Delff*, niet de Stat de welcke door het voor-seggen ende het antwoort *Apollinis*, maer de welcke door de voornaemsten prijs des drancx van Coren gebrouwen, naest het Engelsche bier, vermaert is, ende soo veel meerder vermaert, om dat die [=Delphi] door een grootachtinge van eene leu-

³⁰ Hallema, *Hugo de Groot*, p. 24. See also Koppenol, *Leids heela*, p. 216.

³¹ Borowski, *Pojęcie i problem „renesansu północnego”*, p. 101.

³² Junius, *Historia Bataviae*, p. 260.

genachtige ende ydele sake, haer vermaertheyt becomen hebben. Maer dese [=Delft] uyt het profijt ende nutticheydt dienende tot voetsel ende onderhout des levens, heeft door hare vernufticheyt dese lof becomen, dat by nae nergheens gheen en anderen dranck begheert werdt, dan den welcken inde *Delfsche Ketelen* ghebrouwen is.³³

The next [city] is Delft, this is not to say the town that owes its fame to the predictions and answers of Apollo, but rather, to the high quality of the beverage that is brewed from wheat, famous next to English ale, and indeed much more so, because the former [=Delphi] got its fame from celebrating a false and idolatrous thing. But the latter [=Delft] gained just praise for ingeniously making something profitable and useful, which serves both as nourishment and as a means of livelihood, so that there is no drink more in demand than the one brewed in the cauldrons of Delft.

A similar rhetorical device of *correctio*, by which the etymology of Delft was pegged to Delphi only to be replaced by a more 'truthful' etymology was employed by Caspar Barlaeus (1584-1648) in the first lines of his Latin poem *Delphi*. Writing in 1624, the celebrated Latinist struck a note of disdain for the ancient oracle:

Non ego fatidicis oracula suggero Delphis:
Aut mea falsiloquus moenia Phoebus habet.³⁴

Not of the oracular Delphi do I proclaim the decrees: // For then the story of my city would have been told by the lying Apollo.

In the following lines of his poem Barlaeus went on to list the 'correct' reasons for the renown of Delft. The city owed its fame and its identity neither to Apollo nor (as in Junius' *Batavia*) to beer-brewing, which had been the main branch of Delft commerce for much of the 16th century. To Barlaeus the true source of the town's prestige lay in the deeds of consecutive Stadholders from the princely House of Orange, William, Maurice and Frederic Henry, who had spent some time in Delft, and whose valour during the Dutch Revolt against the Habsburgs he celebrated in the remainder of the poem. Barlaeus rejected the mythologized identity

³³ Junius, Hadrianus; Boot, Godefroy (transl.), *Een seer cort doch clare beschrijvinge vande voornaemste ghemuyrde ende onghemuyrde steden ende vlekken van Holland ende West-Vriesland*. Delft: Jan Andriesz Cloeting, 1609, fol. 9r. Cited here after Koppenol, *Leids heeral*, p. 201.

³⁴ C. Barlaeus, *Poemata*. Amsterdam: Joannes Blaeu, 1646, vol. ii (*Elegiarum et miscellaneorum carminum*), pp. 403-404. The text of this poem was cited by Van Bleyswijck, *Beschrijvinge der stad Delft*, p. 105.

of Delft very much like Junius before him but for a different reason: the oracles were synonymous with falsehood and therefore unworthy of the attention of a poet aspiring to convey the truth.

The vernacular poets of the Delft chamber of rhetoric *De Rapenbloem* were no less critical of Delphi than the learned humanists Junius and Barlaeus. During a poetic competition in Vlaardingen (1617), the Delft rhetorician Gijsbrecht van Hogendorp came with a poem where Delft was greeted not as a modern namesake of Delphi but, correctly, as the town that took its name from the process of 'delving' (*delven*) a canal:

Welkoom / die u begin en name hebt gekomen
 Van't delven met de Spa: maer t'zijn maer blauwe blomen
 Dat Delf na *Delphis* hiet / want my noch wel gedinckt
 Dat Goverd met den Bult Delf dolf en heeft omringt...³⁵

*Welcome, o town that takes its name // from digging with a spade; but it's
 mere tom-foolery // That Delft should be named after Delphi, for I remember
 very well // That Godfrey the Hunchback ordered the Delf to be excavated
 and surrounded the town with a moat...*

Another Dutch vernacular writer who made much, in a satirical way, of the analogy of Delft and Delphi was the Leiden poet-secretary Jan van Hout (1542-1609), one of the early pioneers of Renaissance poetry in the northern Netherlands in the years immediately after the Dutch Revolt. Van Hout was a dynamic individual who profited greatly from being at the center of a network of Dutch humanists in his native town of Leiden. In the year 1596 he wrote a comedy in Dutch for the charitable lottery that was held in Leiden (*Loterijspel*), a loose reworking of Aristophanes' *Plutus*. One of its protagonists was the gullible peasant Bouwen Aertvelt who, having lost his source of livelihood in a flood, tried to improve his lot by embarking on a fool's errand to find a 'Delft [Delphic] miracle or oracle' ('Delfsche miraeckel of driaeckel') in a town stocked with empty beer-cauldrons.³⁶ For a play that indirectly mocked the Catholic belief in miracles, the practice of pilgrimages, and faith in divine intervention, its scene was uncoincidentally set in Delft, which had been known in Holland as a site of miracles during the 15th and 16th century. Drawing a mask of pseudo-antiquity over contemporary Holland, Van Hout's *Loterijspel* was designed to attack the still-memorable manifestations of Catholicism that persisted in the minds of his audience by equating

³⁵ *Vlaerdings-Redenrijck-bergh*, fol. V3v.

³⁶ 'Driaeckel' has the additional meaning of an 'antidote'. Koppenol, *Leids heeal*, p. 402, cf. footnote 92.

such practices with a foolish and disreputable pagan idolatry. One might speculate whether Jan van Hout was aware of the writings of Nerdenus; the most recent research on the *Loterijspel* by J. Koppenol does not supply an answer to this question.³⁷

Van Hout was certainly not the only Dutch Protestant writer to pursue such a strategy using the Delft-Delphi analogy. Dirck van Bleyswijck, writing over seventy years later, in 1667, launched a similarly-phrased critique on Catholic miracles in Delft. After citing a record of the miracles that occurred before the Piëta at St. Ursula's Church, he stated that

[...] veele Christen menschen van verre tot desen Tempel van *Delft* quamen trecken, ten naesten by als tot den Tempel te *Delphi* de heydenen eertijts deden.³⁸

[...] a great many Christians from distant parts journeyed to this temple in Delft, quite like the heathen once did to the temple at Delphi.

To Van Bleyswijck, therefore, the name 'Delphi' signified superstition, whereas the Catholic miracles, which he cited at length, were no different than the pagan rituals of ancient Greece.

Interestingly, and quite fortunately, this was by no means the end of the appearance of the Oracle of Delphi and the Sybils in the literary world of Delft at the dawn of the early modern period. A Catholic priest from Delft, Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele (1579-1630), resolved to speak at length of the Sybilline prophecies in the preface to his volume of religious songs *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*. Stalpart van der Wiele's Christian exegesis of the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil or other Sibylline prophecies was situated in a long-standing tradition of Christian scholarship dating from late Antiquity.³⁹ Such preoccupations, and a corresponding desire, where possible, for a cultural synthesis, were by no means restricted to the Catholics of the Netherlands but reflected a profound understanding of the universality of Christ's message of salvation that was dear to so many humanist intellectuals of the Renaissance (see below, **Chapter 8.5**).

³⁷ J. Koppenol does not provide any mention of Nerdenus or his work in *Leids heelal*.

³⁸ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 229.

³⁹ Stalpart van der Wiele (ed. Mensink), *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, pp. 49-62.

3.3. LITERARY NETWORKS AND THE CHURCH IN DELFT AROUND 1550

The literary world of mid-16th century Delft existed largely along the same lines as in the preceding decades. The main literary networks converged, as in the past, around religious institutions: churches and convents. The wealthy and prestigious Church of St. Hippolyte (presiding over a populous parish that extended along the Oude Delft)⁴⁰ was the center of literary life in the town. It is here that we encounter the figures of two learned clerics, the curates Lambert Willemsz van Varick and Martinus Duncanus. Lambert Willemsz van Varick (c. 1490-1551) was an educated priest who came to Delft from Gouda in 1534. Van Varick had contacts among the civic elites and in artistic circles. His companions on a journey which he had undertaken to the Holy Land in 1520-1521 included the painter Jan van Scorel (who went on to paint an altar for the New Church in 1550)⁴¹ and the Delft *hoogheemraad* Jan de Huyter.⁴² Van Varick belonged to a generation of humanist-trained intellectuals. Well-versed in the classics (his personal notebook contains quotations of Ovid and Horace),⁴³ he was the owner of some precious *objets d'art* and several books. Van Varick's will provides evidence of book ownership in Delft around the year 1550. Among the books mentioned in this document was a work by Nicholas of Lyra, a collection of sermons and *Margarita Euangelica of die Euangelische Peerle* by the Cologne Carthusian Dietrich Loher (Theodoricus Loher a Stratis, 1495-1554).⁴⁴

⁴⁰ According to the vice-curate of the Church of St. Hippolyte, Jacob Cralinck, who was interviewed by officials collecting tax information in 1514, out of the 5000 communicants in his parish (a number that included villagers as well as townsfolk), 2000 lived off almsgiving; his colleague at the Church of St. Ursula, Jan de Hoyere, testified that half of the 3600 communicants were impoverished. The 1514 census is incidentally the only one in late-medieval or early-modern Delft in which priests were asked to provide sociological data about their parishioners. *Informacie* (ed. Fruin), pp. 336-337. A detailed socio-economic study of Delft in the mid-16th century is by Verhoeven, *Het eerste kohier van de tiende penning van Delft* (1543).

⁴¹ Lemmens, 'Schilderkunst in Delft', p. 147.

⁴² Lucas, 'Rond Jan van Scorel', pp. 123-150.

⁴³ Gemeentearchief Delft, Breesnee nr. inv. 30, p. 144. Referred to by Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 144, p. 201 n. 262 and 263.

⁴⁴ Mentioned in Van Varick's will (Gemeentearchief Delft, Handschriften 38 B 2, 26) cited by Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 146. Theodoricus Loher a Stratis, *Die euangelische peerle of Margarita euangelica*, Utrecht: J. Berntsz, 29 September 1535 (NK 1688).

Van Varick's successor was the university-trained priest Jacobus Goudanus (Jacob Gerrits, Jacob Moen, d. 1557). Goudanus came to Delft in 1551, having completed his studies at Louvain in 1543, but succumbed to the plague only six years later among with other priests. The Delft priests, victims of the plague, were commemorated by Cornelius Musius in a Latin elegy written specially for this occasion.⁴⁵

On 17 September 1558 the curateship of the Church of St. Hippolyte fell to Martinus Duncanus (Maarten Donk, 1505-1590).⁴⁶ This Louvain-educated priest was a capable Latin poet who provided some dedicatory verse for the *Solitudo* of Cornelius Musius (1566)⁴⁷ and *Officium Missae* of Petrus Opmeer (1570).⁴⁸ Duncanus' writing from his period in Delft fell into the category of catechetic and polemical literature intended to correct, from a Catholic point of view, the doctrines of the Anabaptists and Calvinists. Duncanus' books concerned the most contested points of Catholic theology. The pressing issue of the year 1566, the need to justify the place and role of sacred images in Catholic religious worship against the arguments and actions of the Calvinist iconoclasts, was treated in *Een cort onderscheyt tusschen Goddelyke ende Afgoddische Beelden* ('A concise difference between divine and idolatrous images', 1567). Appended to the same volume was a text on a not unrelated issue –justifying the worship of saints as 'the living images of God' (*Het tweede boexken vande Heyligen in den hemel / dwelck zijn leuendige beelden Gods*). Here, the promising reception of religious oral texts (homilies) was a starting-point for the production of written literature. To create the text of this book, which was furnished with a vast number of references to the Holy Scripture, Duncanus reworked a series of sermons that he had delivered in the Church of St. Hippolyte.⁴⁹ In the introductory passages Duncanus thus defined the function of sacred images:

⁴⁵ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, pp. 147-150. The text of the *planctus* by Musius in Rijksarchief Utrecht, Archief Oud-Bisschoppelijke Clerezie inv. nr. 370, pp. 175-179, cited by Oosterbaan, *op. cit.*, p. 148 and p. 204 n. 308.

⁴⁶ Noordeloos, *Pastoor Maarten Donk*; Hensen, 'Duncanus (Martinus)' in: *NNBW*, vol. iii, pp. 309-312; Oosterbaan, *op. cit.*, pp. 150-163.

⁴⁷ Cornelius Musius, *Solitudo, sive vita solitaria laudata*, Antwerp: Christopher Plantin 1566, fol. L 2.

⁴⁸ Petrus Opmeer, *Officium missae apud ecclesiam tempore quattuor primorum conciliorum generalium in usu fuisse historica assertio*, Antwerp: Christopher Plantin, Delft: Simon Pouwels, 1570, β 2r- β 3v.

⁴⁹ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 157.

[...] tot gedenckenis der heemelscher wercken, ende tot boecken der leecken, om niet alleen doer het ghehoor, maer oock doer tghesicht tot euangelische wercken geporret te worden, ende tot alle danckbaerheyt (want tghesicht meer beweecht dan tghehoor).⁵⁰

[...] to remind us of heavenly things, and [serving] as the books of the laity which motivate to evangelical deeds and gratitude not only when one is listening but also when one is looking (because sight moves us more strongly than hearing).

The Catholic understanding of the Eucharist was explained and contrasted with Calvinist doctrine in *Vant rechte Euangelissche Auontmael Christi Iesu* ('On the true divine Last Supper of Jesus Christ', 1567).⁵¹ Other books published by Duncanus during the period of his residence in Delft were: *Die vruchten der ecclesie Christi* ('The fruits of the Christian Church', Leiden: Dierick Gerridt Horst, 1567) about the missionary activities of the Catholic Church in the Indies, *Van die warachtighe ghemeynte Christi* ('On true communion with Christ', Antwerp: Peeter van Keerberghen, [1567]), an ecclesiological treatise defending the Church against the arguments of the Calvinists and Anabaptists, *Van die verghiffenisse der sonden ende van die rechtvaerdichmakinghe* ('On the forgiveness of sins and on justification', Antwerp: Peeter van Keerberghen, 1568), and *Van die kinderdoop, boeck I* ('On the baptism of children, book I', Antwerp: Peeter van Keerberghen, 1569), a translation of Duncanus' polemic with the Anabaptists written at his first parish on the island of Texel, *Anabaptisticae haereseos confutatio* (1549).⁵² With Martinus Duncanus the Catholic literature of Delft before 1572 passed into a new phase. Among its leading functions Catholic literature came to serve the combined purpose of apologetics (*apologesis*) and catechesis. The apologetic function of Duncanus' writings was advertised in a verse on the title leaf of *Van die warachtighe ghemeynte Christi*:

⁵⁰ Martinus Duncanus, *Een cort onderscheyt tusschen Godlyke ende Afgodissche Beelden [...] Het tweede Boecxken vande Heyligen in den hemel / dwelck zijn leuendige beelden Gods*, Antwerp: Peeter van Keerberghen, 1567 (Universiteitsbibliotheek Gent Meul. 154). Not in STCN or STCV (Short Title Catalogue Vlaanderen); cited after Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 156.

⁵¹ Martinus Duncanus, *Vant rechte Euangelissche Auontmael Christi Iesu*, Antwerp: Peeter van Keerberghen, 1567 (Universiteitsbibliotheek Gent Th 1774). This edition not in STCN or STCV; cited after Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 157.

⁵² For Duncanus' *Anabaptisticae haereseos confutatio* see Van der Kooi, *De Wyberch des Heeren*, pp. 286-288.

Dit is een seker Medecijn /
 Teghen des ongheloofs fenijn /
 Te kennen der Christenen moeder /
 En met haer te zijn Christus broeder.⁵³

This is a sure medicine // Against the poison of unbelief // [this medicine will help] To recognize the mother of Christians [i.e. the Church] // And with her to become a brother of Christ.

The apologetic and catechetic literature of Duncanus contradicts the opinion that Catholic polemicists writing before 1572 generally restricted themselves to the Latin language.⁵⁴ In his choice of Dutch and his selection of themes Duncanus anticipated the writings of Catholic authors in Delft after the year 1600, especially the priests Johannes Stalpart van der Wiele and Ludovicus Makeblijde. The continuity of the theme of apologetics as an antidote, for instance, can be illustrated by an introductory poem by G. Balemus advertising the *Roomsche reijs* (1624) of Stalpart van der Wiele:

Koopt dit Boukje, 'k weet voorseker
 't Sal u strekken tot een beker
 Vol van starcke medicijn,
 Tegens het Geneefs venijn.⁵⁵

Buy this book, I know for sure, // It will serve you as a cup // Containing strong medicine // Against the poison of Geneva.

Returning to Duncanus, one must state that this curate published his books not in Delft but, almost without exception, in the southern Netherlands, especially Antwerp. This too is an analogy with the period after 1572, when the printing of Catholic religious literature ceased in Holland but continued in the Spanish-held provinces of the southern Netherlands. On the whole, a radical decline in the number of religious books published in Delft set in shortly after 1525 and continued very much until the Dutch Revolt. A rough orientation can be provided by comparing STCN data for Delft printers. The STCN between c. 1501 and c. 1525 yields 20 post-incunables, of which 18 are Catholic religious texts (90%). A comparable query for the years c. 1526-1572 has revealed that out of

⁵³ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 159.

⁵⁴ This opinion is expressed e.g. by Post, *Handboek van de kerkgeschiedenis*, vol. iii, p. 230.

⁵⁵ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Roomsche Reijs*, fol. [* * * 3 r].

a total of 47 imprints not more than 16 can be classified under the heading of Catholic religious literature, giving a much lower figure of 34%.

This decline can be documented through a single example. The STCN records merely one devotional text, the *Schriftuerlick ghebedeboeck* ('Scriptural prayer-book') of the Delft Franciscan (friar minor) Peter van Slupick (Delft: Simon Jansz, 5 November 1557), published during the twenty years between 1543 and 1563. A greater contrast with the productive periods in Delft printing between 1477- c. 1525 is hardly imaginable. Although these figures do not imply automatically that Catholic readership in Delft and the interest in Catholic literature, which remains ever so elusive owing to a lack of source documents,⁵⁶ declined accordingly, yet one might reasonably expect this to have been the case.

The Catholic books published during the period 1525-1572 continued the pattern established in the preceding years, albeit with some modifications. First of all, as we have seen with Martinus Duncanus, polemical books containing an apologesis of Catholic doctrine started appearing ever since the 1520s. An early example is *Een corte declaratie ende antwoert met bewisinghe der heyliger schriftueren teghen zommighe articulen der lutheranen* ('A brief declaration and answer with proof from the Holy Scripture against some articles of the Lutherans'). This book, the work of the German theologian Johannes Eckius (Johann Maier von Eck, 1486-1543), was printed in 1527 at the presses of Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder but distributed by one 'meester Luyt', the verger of the Old Church in Amsterdam ('coster van doude kercke').⁵⁷ Since 1519 Eckius became the main champion in Germany of Catholic theology, supported by scholarly Biblical exegesis, against the views of Martin Luther. The vernacular treatise published in Delft was a translation of his *Loci com-*

⁵⁶ One must bear in mind that most of the printing output was for export; a considerable number of books were imported from other destinations. The exact (or even approximate) comings and goings of books in Delft, however, are largely unknown. The main corpus of research on literary life in Delft before 1572 is the work of F.C. van Boheemen and Th. C. J. van der Heijden: 'Literatuur en toneel in Delft' in *De stad Delft : cultuur en maatschappij tot 1572*, pp. 162-165; *De Delftse rederijkers 'Wy rapen gheneucht'* (1982); *Met minnen versaemt* (1999); however, in all these publications the authors concentrated mainly on the activities of the Delft chambers of rhetoric. Hitherto Delft has not been the subject an all-encompassing study of the literary landscape (book production and readership) from the 15th till the 16th or even 17th century along the lines of, for instance, H. Brinkman's *Dichten uit liefde* which documents the literary life in Leiden during the later medieval period.

⁵⁷ [Johann Meier von Eck], *Hier beghint een corte declaratie ende antwoert met bewisinghe der heyliger schriftueren teghen zommighe articulen der lutheranen*. Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder 1527 (NK 752).

munes adversus Lutherum (1525).⁵⁸ Paradoxically, this book brought Lettersnijder into conflict with the Holland judiciary (*Hof van Holland*) because the printer had neglected to obtain the required permission. Behind this decision might have been a wish (admittedly a short-sighted one) to suppress all publicity (either positive or negative) regarding the doctrine of Luther. Upon advice from the central authorities at Brussels, Eckius' treatise was banned throughout Holland, but Lettersnijder, despite attempts to prosecute him, was nevertheless permitted to continue printing in Delft.⁵⁹

Liturgical texts in Latin as well as translated into the vernacular formed another major category. Some of these texts were printed in Delft to be sold elsewhere. The so-called Utrecht Psalter, *Psalterium Traiectense* (Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder, 29 January 1529) was printed for Jan Severszoon die Croepel and Bartholomeus Jacobszoon, both of Leiden.⁶⁰ Another Latin Psalter was printed by Lettersnijder in 1532.⁶¹ A vernacular translation of the Book of Psalms with glosses, *Den psalter met verklaringen* came out of Lettersnijder's printing workshop two years later. Lettersnijder's edition was based on a translation of the Psalms from the Hebrew into Latin undertaken by Jan van Campen (Campensis, de Campo, Transisalanus, d. 1538), a promising Louvain philologist, author of the *Grammatica Hebraica* (1528). Van Campen's translation of the Psalms, *Psalmorum omnium iuxta Hebraicam veritatem paraphrastica interpretatio* (1529), was dedicated to the Polish humanist Johannes Dantiscus.⁶² The book was eventually condemned by the theological faculty of the university of Louvain (April 1533). As a consequence of this verdict Joannes van Campen set out on a journey through Germany, Poland and Italy, seeking to clear his name and to increase his knowledge of the Hebrew language. He was received favourably at Rome but died soon afterwards at Freiburg, on his way back to the Netherlands.⁶³ Interestingly, around the same time as Van Campen's humanist edition of the psalms appeared in Delft, a different printer, Frans Everszoon Sonder-

⁵⁸ Kirsch, 'Johann Eck (Eckius)' in *CE* vol. v, pp. 271-273.

⁵⁹ Van der Lof, 'Boekdrukkers en hun werk', p. 16.

⁶⁰ *Psalterium Traiectense*, Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder, 29 January 1529 (NK 345).

⁶¹ *Psalterium*, Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder, Aug. 1532 (NK 347).

⁶² Cf. Joannes van Campen, *Psalmorum omnium iuxta Hebraicam veritatem paraphrastica interpretatio*, Nuremberg: Johannes Petreius 1532.

⁶³ Fruytier, 'Campen, Johannes van' in *NNBW*, vol. vi, pp. 259-260. For Jan van Campen's contacts with Dantiscus see Borowski, *Iter Polono-Belgo-Ollandicum*, pp. 74-75.

danck, published a commentary on Psalm 51 ('Miserere mei Deus') by Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498).⁶⁴

The remaining handful of religious books published by Catholic authors in Delft between 1525 and 1572 were mostly works of practical theology and devotion. The topic of achieving salvation was explained in a catechetic treatise called *Deuoet boexken voer alle deuote personen die gaerne sonder vegeuier ten hemel comen souden* ('Pious booklet for all pious persons who wish to go to heaven and avoid purgatory' c. 1521). Its author was Martijn (Martinus) van der Goude, guardian of the cloister of the *Fratres minores* (Minderbroeders) in Delft. The *Deuoet boexken* contained a series of prayers and devotions on the Passion of Christ: the Hours of the Passion, spiritual exercises of the Way of the Cross as well as prayers belonging to the Franciscan devotion of the Seven Wounds of Christ (*Zeven Bloedstortinghen*).⁶⁵

That the Passion of Christ remained the focus of religious life in Delft during the mid-16th century is confirmed by the work of Godschalc Rosemont, an eloquent pastoral theologian, inquisitor and friend of the Dutch Pope Adrian VI. Rosemont's *Berch van Calvarien* (c. 1529)⁶⁶ was not his first work published in Delft, for his *Oefeninghen in die seven bloetstortinghen* ('Exercises pertaining to the Seven Wounds') had come off the press at Lettersnijder's workshop in 1516.⁶⁷ This edition also included prayers to the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary ('seven sonderlinge droefheden van Maria').⁶⁸ In 1542 readers could contemplate Christ's Passion in the anonymous tract published by Lettersnijder's successor Simon Jansz, *Dit*

⁶⁴ Savonarola, Girolamo, *Een wtlegghinge oft ouerdenckinge op den L. psalm Misere-re mei Deus* ([Delft]: Frans Everszoon Sonderdanck, [c. 1535] (NK 3850). Cf. Savonarola (transl. and ed. by J. P. Donnelly), *Prison meditations on Psalms 51 and 34*.

⁶⁵ This little-known devotion most often encompassed the traditional worship of the Five Wounds of Christ (in the hands, feet and side), next to which other wounds, for instance the Crown of Thorns and the Flagellation, were commemorated. Van der Goude, Martijn, *Deuoet boexken voer alle deuote personen die gaerne sonder vegeuier ten hemel comen souden*. Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder, [c. 1521] (NK 1497). See Schmitz, *Het aandeel der minderbroeders*, p. 73.

⁶⁶ Rosemont, Godschalc, *Berch van Calvarien*, Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder [c. 1529] (NK 4183).

For a bibliography of Godschalc Rosemont's writings see Coppens, 'Het "Confessionale" van Godschalc Rosemont', pp. 13-36.

⁶⁷ Rosemont, Godschalc, *Oefeninghen in die seven bloetstortinghen*. Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder, 8 May 1516 (NK 3817). This source is not mentioned by Speakman Sutch, Van Bruaene, 'The Seven Sorrows of the Virgin Mary' although its content was evidently related to the Seven Sorrows devotion.

⁶⁸ Troelstra, *De toestand der catechese in Nederland*, p. 215.

is eene soete meditatie hoe die verloren siel vanden sone gods gheuonden is met zijnre heylicher passien ('A sweet meditation on how the lost soul is found by the Son of God through His holy Passion').⁶⁹ Also dedicated to the suffering of Christ was *Die negen couden* ('The nine colds'). This anonymous booklet was a popular collection of devotional meditations bound together by the common theme of the physical cold to which Christ was exposed on nine occasions during His earthly life.⁷⁰ This book was re-published at least several times by the Delft printers of the Lettersnijder family (the STCN mentions three editions between c. 1500 and 1529).⁷¹

A vast number of books from the preceding period were in continuous circulation and therefore this decline would have been compensated at least partly by an exchange (or import) of already available religious publications. Readership among the laity in Delft was traditionally supported by the institutions of the Church. Already since 1434 or earlier some parishioners of St. Hippolyte had access to a special room or chest at the church that served as a library. Registered in church records dating from 1436 are the names of around sixty subscribers, who were obliged to deposit two pieces of silver in exchange for a key to this library.⁷² The subscribers represented various professions, ranging from wealthy patri-cians to educated craftsmen belonging to the middle class (a maker of tin vessels, a tailor, a baker, a candlemaker).⁷³

The books deposited in the library of St. Hippolyte's Church were lost during a catastrophic fire that burned down a large part of the center of Delft after lightning struck the tower of the New Church on 3 May 1536. This tragic event brings us to the extraneous causes that can help us to explain the radical decline in the production of Catholic literature in Delft after 1525. During the fire of 1536, two churches, several convents, and 2,309 homesteads (out of a total number of 2,616 homesteads recorded in 1514) were heavily damaged or destroyed.⁷⁴ However, there were other, no

⁶⁹ *Dit is eene soete meditatie hoe die verloren siel vanden sone gods gheuonden is met zijnre heylicher passien*, Delft: Simon Jansz, 10 July 1542 (TB 5754).

⁷⁰ *Die negen couden*, Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder 1529 (NK 627). Pleij, *De sneeuwpoppen van 1511*, p. 69.

⁷¹ Besides the edition cited above, other editions included: *Die negen couden*, Delft: Henric Pietersz Lettersnijder [before 1510] (NK 623) and *Een boecxken van deuocien geheten die negen couden*, Delft: Henric Pietersz Lettersnijder, 17 February 1511 (NK 624).

⁷² Haarlem, Bisschoppelijk Archief, Kasboekje Oude Kerk 1434, inv. nr. 551, fol. 41-42, cited by Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 87.

⁷³ Oosterbaan, *ibid.*

⁷⁴ Kok, 'De sociaal-economische situatie in de zestiende eeuw', pp. 98-99.

less significant reasons for the downturn in literary life measured by book production, and one of these is the overall economic decline which occurred in the first half of the 16th century. The citizens of Delft who were interviewed by the authors of the *Informacie up den staet, faculteyt ende gelegentheyte van de steden ende dorpen van Hollant*, a document drawn up for tax assessment purposes in 1514, described a town with a struggling economy, especially in the crucial beer-brewing sector ('de neeringe van den brouwerije geheel vergaen is'). Altogether 98 breweries, most of them small ones, were still in business, no less than 40 had folded during the preceding three years.⁷⁵ The Delft drapers voiced their concerns about a falling turnover and increasing competition.⁷⁶ The reliability of some information can be called into question because it was phrased in such a way as to secure a lower tax rate for the city. However, other data tend to back up this rather bleak image. In the entire town up to 8% of the homesteads were declared empty and 39% were assessed at the lowest income. The two southern quarters, along the Oude Delft (the parish of the Church of St. Hippolyte), were relatively wealthy, with only 27% impoverished homesteads, while in the northern quarters this number stood around 60%.⁷⁷

At the same time during the first half of the 16th century, Delft could hardly contain a rapidly growing population. Despite the destruction of housing caused by the fire of 1536, the number of inhabitants grew from an estimated 10,000 in 1514 to 15,000 (3,300 homesteads) in 1556, when the town was assessed for the Tenth-Penny Tax.⁷⁸ This rise in population might have been due to the measures that Charles V took to relieve the town after the fire by exempting it from taxation for a period of twenty years.⁷⁹ These efforts were only partly successful, for although the town managed to rebuild itself it entered the 1550s once again in a state of prolonged stagnation owing to the stiff competition of merchants and producers from other (especially southern) provinces. This state of recession was only exacerbated by a disastrous pest epidemic that lasted from May 1557 till November of the following year taking more than 5,000 lives.⁸⁰ In 1565 a failed harvest caused partly by flooding of the

⁷⁵ Fruin (ed.), *Informacie*, p. 323. See also pp. 337-338.

⁷⁶ Fruin (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 338.

⁷⁷ Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, pp. 10-11, provides an essential outline of the social-economic situation in Delft in the first half of the 16th century. The figures are cited after Verhoeven, *ibid.*, and Fruin (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 335-336.

⁷⁸ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 9.

⁷⁹ Kok, 'De sociaal-economische situatie in de zestiende eeuw', p. 99.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*; Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 9.

agricultural land around Delft, in combination with declining grain imports⁸¹ and a severe winter, created a food shortage in the town which the authorities proved unable to avert. Added to the unemployment in the weaving industry, and fueled by already-existing resentments,⁸² this social-economic crisis created a volatile climate that can be held partly responsible for the iconoclastic outbursts of 1566.⁸³ This fundamental economic and political dissatisfaction, combined with factors of a religious nature, prepared the ground for the turnover of power in Delft after the landing of the *Geuzen* in the summer of 1572.

⁸¹ The Swedish-Danish war and the closure of the Danish Sound in 1565 meant that ships carrying grain from Gdańsk were unable to get through to the Netherlands. Cf. Glete, *Warfare at Sea 1500-1650*, pp. 121-122.

⁸² Already in the *Informacie* of 1514 the monasteries, with their special tax-exempt status, are named as the strongest competitors of the bakeries, brewers, weaving and spinning trades. *Informacie* (ed. Fruin), p. 336.

⁸³ Kok, 'De sociaal-economische situatie in de zestiende eeuw', p. 100. The blockade of the Danish Sound has been sometimes referred to as the reason for the eruption of the iconoclastic riots, see e.g. Kuttner, *Het hongerjaar 1566*.

4. RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL CRISIS. LITERARY NETWORKS, THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN DELFT AND THE NETHERLANDS DURING THE MID-16TH CENTURY

During the first half of the 16th century Holland became the heartland of the Habsburg Netherlands. Charles V completed the process of uniting the Netherlandish provinces under the house of Habsburg by successively adding Utrecht (the Sticht), Groningen, (1536), Overijssel and Gelderland (1543). The process of unification culminated in the signing of the so-called 'Pragmatic Sanction' (1548) by the States General and the Imperial Diet. Under the 'Pragmatic Sanction' the Habsburg Netherlands were recognized as a single distinct political entity. The seventeen provinces of the Netherlands were thereby united in a 'Burgundian Circle' of the Holy Roman Empire. In 1549, all the provinces endorsed the 'Pragmatic Sanction' in order to resolve the issue of handing over the Netherlands to Charles's successor Philip (the later Philip II of Spain).¹ The position of the region as a whole, however, in relation to the political objectives of the Habsburg empire had taken a turn for the worse after the resumption of hostilities against France. This costly and exhausting conflict was to last from 1521 till 1559.

When Charles V returned from Spain to the Netherlands in 1531 he entered a country that, in many respects, was a different one from the one that he had left, even though on a superficial level little had changed. Concurrently with events taking place on the political stage, the first decades of the 16th century witnessed the gradual 'disintegration of Catholic unity'² in the Netherlands. This disintegration was a process lasting several generations, which started at the peripheries of the Habsburg state, and just as significantly, at the peripheries of the existing dioceses, in mainly rural provinces such as Overijssel, Groningen and Gelderland. Christian humanism, the study of the Bible by scholars

¹ Sicking, 'De integratie van Holland', p. 259-260.

² This term is used by Geyl, *Geschiedenis van de Nederlandse stam*, vol. i, p. 215.

of Latin and Greek, was pioneered in provincial Friesland by Rudolph Agricola and his circle, including Alexander Hegius, the later rector of the *fraterschool* at Deventer (Overijssel) attended by the young Erasmus.³ From the 1490s onwards the civic ('Latin') schools were the main channel through which Christian humanism pervaded the cultural life of the Low Countries.⁴ At the same time the voice of theological dissent was making itself more widely heard in the public arena. Already in the late 15th century Wessel Gansfort of Groningen, a Netherlandish Christian humanist who inspired Luther, openly engaged in a critical polemic with several Holland priests against 'purgatory, indulgences and intercession [by saints]' ('over 't stuck van 't Vagevyer / d'Aflaten en Voorbiddinge').⁵

After 1500 the most powerful voice in the Christian humanist movement belonged to Erasmus. A little-known fact is that the Rotterdammer's second encounter with monastic life occurred in the vicinity of Delft. After three years spent in a monastery at s'-Hertogenbosch, around the year 1486 Erasmus stayed for a short while as a novice at the monastery of Sion near Delft, which had been founded by a group of Augustinian monks from St. Hieronymusdal (a chapter house of the Brethren of the Common Life) in the mid-15th century. Petrus Scriverius, a seventeenth-century historian and biographer of Erasmus, reported that the future philologist took his leave of the superior of the monastery saying:

[...] dat hy noch niet en wist wat de Werelt was, noch wat het Kloosterleven was, noch wat hy selver was: Over sulx waer het beter dat hy hem noch een wyl tijds inde Scholen wat versochte, opdat hy hem selve te beter mocht leeren kennen.⁶

[...] that he knew neither what the world was, nor what monastic life was, nor who he was himself; therefore it would be better for him to spend some more time on his education in order to come to a more perfect knowledge of himself.

Erasmus continued his studies in 1489 at the chapter house of Emaus at Steyn (near Gouda). Emaus, incidentally, belonged to the congregation of Sion, which took its name from the chapter house near Delft where Erasmus had stayed.⁷ A painting of the Christ on the Cross be-

³ Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, p. 642.

⁴ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 43-44.

⁵ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschrijvinge van Delft*, vol. i, p. 400.

⁶ Petrus Scriverius, 'Kort in-houd, van 't leven Desiderii Erasmi van Rotterdam', in: Erasmus, *Colloquia familiaria, Dat is, Gemeensame t'Samenspraken*, fol. *3r- *3v. For Erasmus' noviciate at Sion see also Van Bleyswijck, *Beschrijvinge der stad Delft*, pp. 360-361.

⁷ Post, *Modern Devotion*, pp. 312-313.

lieved to have been made by Erasmus at Steyn became a cherished possession of the Delft humanist Cornelius Musius, rector of the convent of St. Agatha, who proudly displayed it in his chambers ('Men sach oock eertijds in de kamer van den opgemeeten Prior Cornelius Musius een Crucifix dat Erasmus gheschildert hadde / want hy in syn Jeucht in 't Clooster Steyn by der Goude nevens het vervorderen van sijne studie oock de Schilderkonst leerde').⁸

Soon after his departure from Holland, Erasmus published some of his most influential works judging by their impact on readers in the early-modern Netherlands: the *Adagia* (1500), *Enchiridion* (1503) and *Colloquia* (1518). It is widely accepted that the *Praise of Folly* (*Moriae encomion*, 1511), translated into Dutch nearly five decades later by Johann Geillyaert of Emden (1560), had a profound influence, along with the *Adagia* and *Colloquia*, on the satirical and persuasive literature produced by the Dutch rhetoricians since the mid-16th century.⁹

The popular (and accurate) image of Erasmus as a masterly maker of complex social and religious satire, however, does not entirely correspond to the picture that emerges when one looks at the selection of books by Erasmus that were published in Delft. The publications that Delft readers could have obtained from their printers were of a different nature: as a rule these were serious theological commentaries dealing with the interpretation of the New Testament. In 1526 Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder brought out a translation of Erasmus' *De immensa dei misericordia* (1524) under the Dutch title *Een sermoen van die onbegripelijke barmherticheit Goods*.¹⁰ In the mid-1520s Lettersnijder started producing a partial translation of Erasmus' *Paraphrasis in novum testamentum*. A commentary on the Gospel of St. Matthew¹¹ was followed by St. Paul's Letter to the Romans and both Letters to the Corinthians.¹²

One might wonder who were the readers of Erasmus in Delft when Lettersnijder printed these books in the 1520s. Much later, during the

⁸ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryving van Delft*, vol. i, p. 321. A Latin inscription which Musius added to the image naming Erasmus as the painter is cited by Opmeer, *Historia Martyrum Batavicum*, p. 72. Cf. Van Heussen, *Batavia Sacra* [Dutch transl.], p. 212.

⁹ Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, pp. 645-650.

¹⁰ Erasmus, *Een sermoen van die onbegripelijke barmherticheit Goods*, Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder, 1526 (NK 878).

¹¹ Erasmus, *Paraphrasis, dat is een uitsprekinghe vander schrifturen in S. Matheus Evangelie*, Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder, [c. 1523] (NK 2980).

¹² Erasmus, *Paraphrases oft wtlegginghen op S. Paulus Epistele totten Romeynen en op beyde Epistelen totten Corinthen*, Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder 1526 (NK 877). See no. 37, *Het boek in Nederland in de 16^e eeuw*, p. 71.

'Dutch Golden Age' of the 17th century, Erasmus was widely seen as one of the forefathers of the Reformation in the Netherlands. Especially among moderate Dutch Protestants Erasmus was esteemed as the thinker whose opinions best expressed the 'true' direction that the Reformation had been expected to take. Erasmus was praised, for instance, as a 'Reformer of the Refomers' ('een Reformateur van de Reformateuren') because he advocated religious toleration and refrained from 'reforming through conflict, violence and rioting' ('t Reformeren met twist / geweld en oproer').¹³ In the minds of many Dutch Protestants, especially those of the regent class (the so-called *libertijnen*), but also Anabaptists and Lutherans, Erasmus represented the figure of the centrist reformer who wisely distanced himself from the excesses of a militant Reformation. The seventeenth-century historian Petrus Scriverius, who shared this point of view, was aware that this 'middle position' gave rise to negative reactions on both sides of the inter-religious debate:

In Religions saken is hy [i.e. Erasmus] seer twijfelachtig geweest yet te besluuten, ja hy had gaern gesien dat de Roomsche Kerk van haer grove misbruyken mocht worden gesuyvert, doch hy verstond hier door een anderen weg als sommige deden: daer door hy dan van vele heftige worde gelastert, als te flau wesende. Hy had veel dingen tegen de misbruyken des Pausdoms geschreven, eer de Reformatie begost: also dat hy daer na genaemd worde de Hen, die de eyeren geleyd hadde, waer uyt alle Kettters waren gebroed. Hoe wel hy hem nochtans opentlijk tegen de Roomsche Kerk niet en stelde.¹⁴

With regard to religion, he was indecisive, and indeed, he advocated purifying the Roman [Catholic] Church of its gross abuse, but he differed from others in his understanding of the way along which this was to occur; therefore, many attacked him in strong terms as being excessively faint-hearted. He wrote much against the abuse by the papacy before the Reformation had started; because of this he was later called 'the hen that laid the eggs from which all the heretics had hatched', even though he had not (in any case openly) positioned himself against the Roman [Catholic] Church.

Daniel Heinsius perceptively described the ambiguities of Erasmus' position as a self-fashioning 'Protean' intellectual:

¹³ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, vol. i, p. 402. Brandt, *Geschiedenis der Reformatie*, pp. 129-131.

¹⁴ Scriverius, 'Kort in-houd, van 't leven Desiderii Erasmi van Rotterdam', in: Erasmus, *Colloquia familiaria, Dat is, Gemeensame t'Samenspraken*, fol. *4r. Here, Scriverius cited a Dutch translation of a well-known anti-Erasmian saying: 'Ubi Erasmus innuit, Lutherus irruit' (cf. Post, *Handboek van de kerkgeschiedenis*, p. 132).

Een waren *Proteus* was hy dewelke gelijk hy sich in alle gestalten en verscheyde fatsoenen konde veranderen, en van naturen geboren om eens yders rol te kunnen spelen, also ook over al hem selven gelijk was, dat is, eenvoudig en oprecht. So dat ook selfs die gene die hy op zijn rolle komt te stellen, tegen wil en danck [...] hem voor een Hollander erkennen.¹⁵

He [i.e. Erasmus] truly resembled Proteus in that he assumed all kinds of figures in various manners and, although he was naturally-endowed to play any role, he nevertheless remained true to himself in all situations, that is, being simple and sincere. Therefore even those whom he made an object of mockery recognized him, willingly or not, [...] to be a Hollander.

It is generally believed that the 'Hollander' Erasmus quickly became the symbolic figure of a 'non-dogmatic pluriform crypto-Protestantism',¹⁶ which captured the minds of the urban elites of the Netherlands from the 1520s onwards. At the same time, one must be reminded of the fact that the dividing lines were not always sharply defined. Even as a native Protestantism developed through contact with the ideas of Erasmus, the Rotterdammer's writings resonated with learned orthodox Catholic humanists, e.g. Cornelius Musius in Delft, who valued classical philology but nevertheless remained steadfast servants of the Church.¹⁷

The crypto-Protestants diverged from the teaching of the Church wherever that movement tended to downplay or reject the significance of the Sacraments in Christian life, where salvation was sought exclusively in the domain of good ethical conduct and individual piety. The main vehicle for the transmission of the ideas of Biblical humanism, especially in Holland, were the civic schools. It is here that one can find the 'Biblical humanists', whose non-Latinate followers might have been the readers of the Lutheran Bible translations published by Lettersnijder. At the head of the circle of 'Biblical humanists', who had an impact on the literary life in Delft, were Gulielmus Gnapheus, rector of the Latin school at The Hague, Cornelis Hoen, advocate at the *Hof van Holland*, and Johannes Sartorius, rector at Noordwijk.¹⁸ The Latin school at Delft was also

¹⁵ Daniel Heinsius, 'Aen Petrus Schriverius' in Erasmus, *Colloquia familiaria, Dat is, Gemeensame t'Samenspraken*, fol. *7v-*7r.

¹⁶ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 53.

¹⁷ A sign of Musius' respect for Erasmus as a philologist was a volume of funerary poems, *Ad Iacobum Sanctaragundum Tumulorum D. Erasmi Roterodami Libellus*, Louvain: Rutgerus Rescius, September 1536 (NK 1582), referred to by Wijdeveld, 'Cornelis Musius', p. 166; Coppens, *Erasmiana Lovaniensia*, p. 272-273.

¹⁸ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 234. In 1531 Gnapheus authored the *Acolastus*, a widely-staged comedy based on the parable of the Prodigal Son. Gnapheus did

widely considered a center of dissent. Already by the year 1522 its rector, Frederik Hondebeke (Canirivus), found himself under investigation for propagating ideas contrary to the Catholic faith. Hondebeke, who had ties to the German Protestant scene, was imprisoned at The Hague in 1525; another teacher, one 'Dirick van Utrecht', was dismissed in 1526.¹⁹ All through the period before the Revolt a few schoolmasters (though perhaps not even the majority)²⁰ continued to generate an atmosphere of ideas that were contrary to Catholic teaching.²¹ The most publicized incident of this type occurred around 1555, when the activities of the rector of the Latin school, Henricus Geldorpius, were scrutinized by the curate of the Old Church, Jacobus Goudanus, and by a succession of ecclesiastical inquisitors.²² The Delft printer Harman Schinkel (Harmannus van Montfoort), who was burned at the stake for distributing heretical literature in 1568, started his career as a schoolmaster, choirmaster and rector of the *domus pauperum* of the Latin school at Delft.²³

Simultaneously with the spread of this native Protestant Reformation, towards the end of the second decade of the 16th century the ideas of Martin Luther started penetrating into the Netherlands. As a matter of fact it is difficult to separate 'Lutheranism' from other, no longer Catholic, religious beliefs, for the former label was applied indiscriminately by the civic and ecclesiastical authorities to all varieties of religious heterodoxy.²⁴ The emergence of Protestantism was to have vast consequences for the political climate in Delft and other cities of the Netherlands. In direct reaction to 'Lutheranism' the first anti-heresy 'placard' (*plakkaat*) was published by the regent, Margaret of Austria, in 1521.²⁵ From the onset some groups of Catholic clergy seemed to veer off towards Protestant-

not remain long in the Netherlands. In 1531 he arrived with a group of Dutch Protestant émigrés in Elbląg (Elbing) where he became rector of the local gymnasium (1535-1541); in the following years Gnapheus accepted a positions as rector of the gymnasium and later as professor at the university of Königsberg. For Gnapheus and Poland, see Borowski, *Iter Polono-Belgo-Ollandicum*, pp. 156-158. For Gnapheus' *Acolastus* see Budzisz, *Biblia i tradycja antyczna*, pp. 97-105.

¹⁹ Kok, 'Opkomst van het Protestantisme', p. 108.

²⁰ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 314.

²¹ Beckers and Leeuw, 'Onderwijs: Scholen', p. 114.

²² Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, pp. 314-315.

²³ Beckers and Leeuw, 'Onderwijs: Scholen', p. 115.

²⁴ De Jong, 'De kerken der Hervorming', p. 91; Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 233.

²⁵ Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie*, pp. 67-70.

ism. The very first individuals put to death in all of Europe for adhering to 'Lutheranism' were two Augustinian monks burned at the stake in Antwerp (1523).²⁶ In Delft, the vice-curate of the Old (St. Hippolyte's) Church, one 'meester Pieter', sympathized with the 'Lutherans' which led to his imprisonment in 1525. A heterodox Dominican, one 'Wouter' (the so-called 'Luthersche monnick'), was active in Delft between 1520 and 1528. Furthermore, heresy was believed to be proliferating in the chapels of charitable institutions,²⁷ while a Lutheran Bible was openly printed by Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder in Delft as early as 1524.²⁸

The period of the 1520s and 1530s was marred, in the minds of many (not only Catholic) Dutch of the 'Golden Age', by intellectual chaos and uncertainty. The attacks on the Church, initiated under the mantle of reform by the humanist elites, were soon taken up with an astounding rapidity and given a new impetus by all classes of society. The Calvinist historian Petrus Christiaensz Bor, writing in the late 16th century, expressed a strong sense of ambiguity and unease (shared by many others)²⁹ in reaction to the pervasive relativism, subjectivism and social disorder brought about by the arrival of all manner of rival heterodox religious groups:

Also zijnder vele eensdeels geleerde / en ook eensdeels ongeleerde geweest / die haer selven opgeworpen hebben tegen de Roomse Kerke / en begonnen eerst meest secretelijken het volk te leren / te straffen en te vermanen / en de Roomse Kerke te veroordelen / en aenhang te soeken / maer want sy meestendeel met de doorde letter der Schrift / sonder den rechten Geest en het Leven / het volk leerden en onderwesen / so bracht een ieder na sijn eigen sin en verstant een sonderlinge gelove en opinie voort / 't welk niet geschieden en kon / waer 't datse alle van God en den enigen Meester Christo geleert waren geweest: also zijn allengskens vele verscheiden Secten opgeresen in vele verscheiden Landen / welke alle t'samen eens waren / daer in datse tegen de Roomse Kerke riepen / en deselfde veroordeelden voor valsch / maer in haer selven waren sy selfs ook gedeilt / oneens en twistig [...] sommige gingen met dromen en gesichten om / die sy voor waerheit predikten en wilden geloofd hebben.³⁰

²⁶ Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie*, pp. 79-80.

²⁷ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 234-236.

²⁸ *Dat nieuwe Testament. welc is dat leuende woert Goods*, Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder, 9 November 1524 (NK 378). The Hague Koninklijke Bibliotheek 227 G 14.

²⁹ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 94.

³⁰ Bor, *Oorsprongk, begin en vervolgh der Nederlandsche Oorlogen*, vol. i, p. 12.

So there were many individuals, both learned and not, who rose up against the Roman [Catholic] Church, and started secretly teaching, punishing and exhorting the people, condemning the Roman [Catholic] Church and seeking support; but because most of them taught the dead letter of the Scripture, without the true life or spirit, therefore each of them produced their own faith and opinion, in proportion to their intelligence, which would not have been the case, had they been instructed by God and the only master, Christ; in this manner there arose many sects in various countries, all of which agreed in one thing, that they were against the Roman [Catholic] Church, and therefore condemned it as false, but they were divided and conflicted among themselves [...] some were led by dreams and visions, which they preached as the truth and which they imposed on others.

The ideological ferment among all these vaguely-defined heterodox groups which constituted the bulk of Protestantism in the Netherlands around 1530 only increased with the arrival on the confessional scene of the Anabaptists. The Anabaptist movement, with its strongly anarchist streak, a proclivity towards violence, and milleniarist objectives, from the outset seemed foreign or even repulsive to the educated Dutch 'humanist' Protestants. The Anabaptists, however, acquired a considerable following among the lower classes and urban artisans. After the failure of the Anabaptists to establish a millennialist kingdom at Münster or to take over Amsterdam in 1534-1535, the fragmented movement was pulled together by one of its leaders, the Delft-born David Joris (1501-1556). The son of a professional actor (*kamerspeelder*),³¹ David Joris apparently considered himself the Messiah and, not unlike the Münsterites, he preached polygamy and communion of material goods; at the same time he skillfully concealed or manipulated his convictions in outward conformity with the prevailing religious mores and speaking what his supporters wanted to hear.³² At some point in his career, shortly before the fire of Delft in 1536, David Joris assaulted a Eucharistic procession.³³ A virulent anti-Catholicism, which expressed itself in attacks on monasteries and churches on the fringes of the Habsburg Netherlands (e.g. Oldeclooster and Warsum in Friesland, in 1535) but also in the center of Holland (Hazerswoude, near Delft),³⁴ characterized the activities of the movement. After a period spent in hiding David Joris was apprehended for his pre-1536 assault. Condemned to torture, he was expelled from Delft

³¹ See Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, p. 175.

³² Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie*, pp. 132-138.

³³ Kok, 'Opkomst van het Protestantisme', p. 109.

³⁴ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 89.

in 1539. Next, twenty-seven of his followers, who had refused to leave the town, perhaps in the belief that David Joris would return to save them, were executed; another group of thirty-six men and women shared the same fate in the next year.³⁵ The executions of the Anabaptists in the decade between 1530 and 1540 on the whole marked a dramatic culmination in the wholesale repression of religious heterodoxy by the judicial apparatus in Holland. In the following decades David Joris' successor as the leader of the Anabaptists, the Frisian formerly Catholic priest Menno Simons, remade the movement into a religion with a marked pacifist strain. The emphasis was now placed not on armed revolt and vengeance on the 'godless' but on individual evangelical piety and strict discipline within the community.³⁶ A book believed to be an Anabaptist devotional treatise (but also read by other Protestants) was the Delft-published *Fonteyne des levens* ('Fountain of life', 1533), the authorship of which is attributed to the Willem van Zuylen van Nyevelt (d. 1543).³⁷

The repression of the Anabaptists (who constituted an overwhelming majority of the victims) as well as of other Protestants, intensified once more in the late 1540s, especially in the southern Netherlands. Altogether, 1,200 men and women were executed throughout the Netherlands under the heresy placards in the forty years from c. 1530 to c. 1570, while many more fled the country or were forced into exile.³⁸ A common historical misapprehension is to represent the anti-heresy legislation in the Netherlands as though it were implemented in the first place by the tribunals of the Church, i.e. by the Inquisition. As a matter of fact the decrees were issued by and implemented by civil tribunals in the name of the secular authorities embodied by the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles V, and his successor Philip II.³⁹ The Delft sheriff (*schout*) Christiaan van der

³⁵ Kok, 'Opkomst van het Protestantisme', p. 109.

³⁶ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 91-93.

³⁷ [anon., W. van Zuylen van Nyevelt?], *Fonteyne des levens*, Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder, 1533 (NK 3034). Lenselink, 'Zuylen van Nyevelt, Willem van' in: *De Nederlandse en Vlaamse auteurs* (ed. Van Bork, Verkruijsse), p. 670; Van der Zijpp, 'Fonteyne des levens' in: *The Mennonite Encyclopedia*, vol. ii, p. 347. For the contents of this book, its circulation and subsequent suppression in the 1530s, see Lenselink, *De Nederlandse psalmberijmingen*, pp. 237-242.

³⁸ Pettegree, 'Religion and the revolt', p. 69; For the urban context of the Reformation in the Low Countries, see Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries*, pp. 71-100.

³⁹ See Post, *Handboek van de kerkgeschiedenis*, vol. iii, pp. 225-226 and pp. 228-230. The question of the Inquisition and the role of the Church in the anti-heretic measures under Charles V and Philip II is still a matter of some controversy among historians

Goes who organized most of the anti-heresy proceedings in the town was a civil official.⁴⁰ On the other hand church inquisitors, for instance Wilhelmus Lindanus, were called to participate in the trials in the capacity of expert witnesses. The distribution of heretic literature was therefore prosecuted, among other offenses, as a criminal act whose gravity was equal to that of treason. Decrees to this effect were produced by the Delft printers. Surviving examples include 'a placard of his majesty regarding all heresies and prohibited books', *tPlacaet vande keyserlicke maiesteyt beroerende alle heresijen, ketterijen ende verboden boucken* printed by Claes Janszoon at The Hague and sold by Simon Jansz in Delft (1544) or a 'placard pertaining to the extirpation of the sects and the protection of our old true Catholic religion', *Placcaet ordinantie ende edict [...] tot extirpatie der secten, ende conseruatie van onsen ouden oprechten gheloue ende catholijxche religie* published by Harman Schinkel (1563).⁴¹

Until around the 1540s and 1550s most Dutch crypto-Protestants headed by the 'Biblical humanists' ascribed to the notion of an evolutionary reformation within the Church. Their 'Erasmian' program of church reform called for evolutionary change under the aegis of the sovereign. The latter part of this program eventually conformed to the principle *cuius regio, eius religio*. Next, the 'Biblical humanists' had envisioned a moral revival, centered on the life of the individual. This renewal was to sweep through the Church but it was not to take the form of an upheaval against ordered society and its institutions.⁴² However, in the 1540s, there were no conditions for realizing the public part of this program either in Holland or elsewhere in the Netherlands.

of the early-modern Netherlands. For a point of view where the implementation of the anti-heresy legislation is generally ascribed to the Inquisition, cf. Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 82. However, A. van der Lem, *De opstand in de Nederlanden*, pp. 46-47, provides arguments questioning whether a full-scale Inquisition was implemented in the Netherlands, although ecclesiastic inquisitors were traditionally consulted by civil tribunals in cases related to matters of religion. Part of the problem lies in terminology: civil tribunals investigating heresy were indiscriminately referred to by contemporaries (and later Protestant historians) as the 'Inquisition'. For the anti-heresy legislation enacted in the Netherlands and its implementation by civil tribunals see also Groenveld, 'Godsdienst en politiek bij Filips II', pp. 8-25.

⁴⁰ See Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *Met minnen versaemt*, p. 61.

⁴¹ *tPlacaet vande keyserlicke maiesteyt beroerende alle heresijen, ketterijen ende verboden boucken*, The Hague: Claes Janszoon; Delft: Simon Jansz [1544] (TB 5798).

Placcaet ordinantie ende edict der co. ma. tot extirpatie der secten, ende conseruatie van onsen ouden oprechten gheloue ende catholijxche religie, Delft: Harman Schinkel [1546] (TB 5915).

⁴² Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie*, p. 129.

The campaign against religious heterodoxy, while apparently effective, nevertheless had not succeeded in eliminating all centers of Protestantism in the Netherlands. Much of this dissent had gone underground. The 'Biblical humanism' of the 1520s, which accentuated gradual reform and an inward spiritual quest for holiness, metastasized among the elites into a practice of dissimulation, where external conformity masked inner rebellion. The crypto-Protestant civic elites radicalized through first a boycott and then a wholesale rejection of the Catholic Church and Habsburg state.⁴³ In this sense, inasmuch as they resulted, or so it seemed, in the silencing and marginalization of the heretically-minded elites, the radical policies of repression launched by Margaret of Austria and Charles V had proved effective.⁴⁴ In practice, however, the success of these policies was superficial. Already, many magistrates lacked the determination to implement anti-heresy measures that were widely considered to be too severe ('Doch alle Wethouders waeren niet even vierig om de luiden ter saeke van Religie in lijden te brengen').⁴⁵ The town councils were also apprehensive that their judicial prerogatives were being appropriated. Anti-heresy legislation was renewed by Charles V in the 'Eternal Edict' of April 1550. These special measures, owing to their unusual severity and obvious deviation from accepted judicial procedures, provoked a storm of outrage, especially in the southern Netherlands, and in effect precipitated the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt.

What factors prepared this process and what exactly 'caused the dominoes to fall' in Holland at that particular moment and with such astounding ease, are questions that have been frequently raised by historians.⁴⁶ One of the events looming in the background of the outbreak of the Dutch Revolt was most certainly the formation of new bishoprics in the Netherlands by Pope Paul IV in the bull *Super universas* published in 1559. Through this territorial reform the Church sought to energize its administration in the Netherlands by dividing existing large bishoprics into thirteen archdioceses and fifteen dioceses. In the northern Netherlands the archdiocese of Utrecht was formed with Frederik Schenk van

⁴³ Cf. Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 83, 94.

⁴⁴ Pettegree, 'Religion and the revolt', p. 69.

⁴⁵ Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie*, p. 157.

⁴⁶ For reasons of brevity only a selective bibliography can be given of the historical research analyzing the complex religious, political and socio-economic contexts of the Dutch revolt can be provided here, but see especially Parker, *The Dutch Revolt*; Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries*; Woltjer, *Tussen vrijheidssrijd en burgeroorlog*; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, esp. pp. 169-178; Van Nierop, 'Alva's Throne', pp. 29-47, Pettegree 'Religion and the Revolt', pp. 67-83.

Toutenburg (c. 1503-1580) as the new archbishop. This powerful archdiocese comprised the wealthiest cities of Holland: Utrecht, Leiden, Delft, Dordrecht and Gouda. Next to the archdiocese of Utrecht, there arose the new dioceses of Haarlem (roughly the northern quarter of Holland), Deventer (Overijssel), Leeuwarden (Friesland), Groningen (Groningen and Drenthe) and Middelburg (Zeeland).⁴⁷ Apart from facilitating administration, the corollary aim of the territorial reform was to render the Church in the Netherlands free of outside political influence; this goal was parallel to the formation of an inner political union, the Burgundian Circle (*Bourgondische kreis*), within the Holy Roman Empire, encompassing the provinces of the Netherlands. The plan to give the Church in the Netherlands greater cohesion was especially important in view of the rapid advance of Protestantism through Germany and France, which threatened to engulf the ecclesiastic structures in the old cross-border bishoprics of the Netherlands. Opposition to the new scheme came from the side of powerful abbeys that had been incorporated into the sees in order to provide the bishops with an independent source of income. These abbeys now stood upon the verge of losing much of their financial autonomy. It appeared to contemporaries that the actions of the new primate of the Netherlands, Antoine de Perrenot Cardinal Granvelle, reversed a time-sanctioned usage. This largely necessary measure, which was designed to ease the financial pressure of maintaining the new dioceses, antagonized many among the clergy and landed aristocracy whose material interests depended on maintaining the old order of things.⁴⁸

The fact that the implementation of the new administrative scheme was inconsistent and too strongly reliant on the indecisive support of the state, contributed more than the protests to weakening the hierarchy of the Church in the Netherlands on the eve of the Revolt. In response to a wave of discontent by the aristocracy, Margaret of Parma, Philip II's half-sister who had been installed as regent of the Netherlands, petitioned the king for Granvelle's removal. Granvelle retired in 1564 and henceforth Philip II suspended the re-organization of the dioceses of the Netherlands.

This wavering stance could not have come at a more critical time, for in June of the same year Margaret of Parma announced the implementa-

⁴⁷ Rogier argued that the new scheme reversed the existing historical trend of consolidating the Church in the Netherlands under the metropolitan see of Utrecht (*Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. i, p. 220).

⁴⁸ For the territorial reform of the Church in the Netherlands under Charles V see Post, *Handboek van de kerkgeschiedenis*, vol. iii, pp. 230-232. Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. i, pp. 201-259.

tion in the Netherlands of the decrees promulgated by the representatives of the Western Church at the Ecumenical Council of Trent (1545-1563).⁴⁹ The Tridentine reforms, which concentrated on doctrinal matters as well as administration, were indispensable for bringing about a Catholic reformation but their successful adoption depended critically on co-operation and mutual trust between bishops and clergy. While the newly-nominated bishops, e.g. Frederik Schenk van Toutenburg of Utrecht, fully supported the decrees of the Council of Trent, many of the higher clergy (especially the strongly secularized diocesan chapters), backed by the nobility in the Council of State (*Raad van State*), insisted on a review of their contents, claiming that to do otherwise entailed an infringement of the privileges of each province.⁵⁰ In the conflict that ensued the count of Egmond and William of Orange became the most vocal spokesmen of the opposition to the reformist Council of Trent. The count of Egmond was dispatched to Madrid to lay his case before the king. In 1565 Philip II conceded to the demands of the opposition, ordering that the decrees of the Council of Trent were not to be announced by royal placard (as previously stated); moreover, the king announced that only those decrees were to be binding which did not restrict the rights of the king and his subjects. Philip II's decision was to prove a fatal error, because it allowed the opposition to reject the doctrines of the Church simply by appealing to the privileges of the provinces of the Netherlands. Furthermore, by submitting to the opponents of the Tridentine reform, the king seemed to call in question the authority the Ecumenical Council of the Church and of the bishops of the Netherlands, thereby undermining both in the eyes of the people. Eventually, after heated debate, the decrees of Trent were passed by the diocesan chapters: in the archdiocese of Utrecht this occurred on October 30, 1565, less than a year before the iconoclastic riots swept through the Netherlands.⁵¹

Already since the late 1550s, Dutch Protestant émigrés in France had come into contact with radical Calvinism, the denomination which would become the driving force of the Revolt. It is generally accepted that the militant Calvinist insurrection in France, which had been going on since 1559, emboldened the Dutch Protestants to defy persecution and to '[...] imitate the provocative and confrontational behaviour that had brought French evangelicals such success'.⁵² The efforts of the French Calvinists to

⁴⁹ Rogier, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 267.

⁵⁰ Rogier, *op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 267-270.

⁵¹ Rogier, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 270.

⁵² Pettegree, 'Religion and the Revolt', p. 72.

create a national church exerted a strong intellectual influence on their Dutch counterparts. We can be sure that these new currents penetrated into Delft, where in 1566 Harman Schinkel secretly printed the adapted French national Confession of Faith by Guido de Brès.⁵³

Since the mid-1550s, and especially in the years up to 1567, vernacular literature increasingly served as a vehicle of religious and political confrontation. The literary products of the chambers of rhetoric (*rederijkerskamers*) of Delft and other towns are a classic example of a revolution in the sphere of ideas that took place over a space of two generations in the Netherlands. Whereas in the preceding decades the rhetoricians had been loyal to Catholic orthodoxy and outspoken in their support of the Habsburg political order, many of them now voiced opinions that were either no longer thoroughly Catholic, and sometimes critical of or even hostile towards the Church.⁵⁴ This change, however, did not come overnight but occurred over several decades. In the example of the Delft rhetoricians during the period immediately preceding the Revolt, one can see that orthodox (Catholic) and heterodox ideas often co-existed alongside one another; this only reinforced, accidentally or deliberately, a sense of ambiguity as to the position of the rhetoricians with regard to the Church.

The Delft chamber 'De Rapenbloem' ('the turnip-flower'), which had as its motto 'Wy rapen Gheneucht' ('We reap enjoyment') and eventually (at least since 1581)⁵⁵ carried in its device the scene of the Transfigura-

⁵³ [De Brès, Guido], *Bekentenisse of belijdenisse des gheloofs. Int gemeyn, ende eendrachtelicken vanden ghelooighen, die in de Nederlanden ouer al verstroyt zijn*, [Delft: Harman Schinkel], 1566 (TB 460).

⁵⁴ The artistic, social, political and religious attitudes of the Netherlandish *rederijkers* are expressed in terms of a dichotomy of 'conformism' and 'rebellion' by Ramakers, *Conformisten en rebellen*, esp. pp. 11-20. Above, the negatively-laden term 'conformism' has been replaced by the more neutral 'loyalism', a term which in the author's opinion better reflects the position of Catholic *rederijkers* in the first quarter of the 16th century. Owing to the wide scope of this subject, only a partial bibliography can be given here of the social, political and religious position of rhetoricians in the Netherlands early-to-mid 16th century; for the most important literature on this subject see esp. Mak, *De rederijkers*, Coigneau, 'Rederijkersliteratuur', pp. 35-57; Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *Met minnen versaemt*; Van Dixhoorn, *Lustige geesten*; Moser, *De strijd voor rhetorica*. For the poetics of the rhetoricians during this period see also Polkowski, 'Poetry in the Age of Transition', pp. 5-21.

⁵⁵ This year is the first documented use of the emblem showing the scene of the Transfiguration and a rebus with two turnips (*rapen*) placed between the letters W and G (to be read as *Wij rapen geneught*). This motto can be roughly translated as 'we gather what is pleasing'; Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *De Delftse rederijkers*, p. 28.

tion on Mt. Tabor, evolved from the 'Guild of the Sweet Name Jesus' ('Gilde des zueten naems Jhesus'), a religious-literary guild (*see above, Chapter 1.2.*). The exact relationship between 'De Rapenbloem' and its predecessors, however, is difficult to ascertain owing to a lack of preserved documents.⁵⁶ It is likely, however, that the guild of the Name Jesus was gradually replaced by a more secular literary guild; the latter contributed to the literary life of the city in a similar vein by organizing performances around religious processions (e.g. the *Ommegang*), staging plays and (since the mid-1540s) by participating in poetic competitions in other towns.

The religious character of the *Ommegang*, for instance, coincided with festivities of a pronouncedly profane nature, many of which were no doubt organized by the rhetoricians. Yet this mixing of the sacred and profane, though perhaps pleasing to some, was understandably a cause of concern to others. The town's Catholic historian Michael Vosmeer, writing after 1572 (i.e. after the reforms of Trent), expressed the opinion that by watching frivolous amusements such as plays the people had lost touch with the sacred dimension of the religious festivity:

[...] dien openbaren heylic-dagh, die onse gods-dienstige voor-Ouders, met een jaerlijckse devotie, kerck-diensten, en lof-sangen, hebben geviert, heeft daer sijn oorsprong af. Maer wy, ontaert van hare deugden, brengen die door, en verwaerloosen de selfde, met t' optrecken van de Schutteryen, Spe-len, brasseryen en andere heylose wellustigheden.⁵⁷

[...] *this [i.e. the miraculous healing of the blind woman Machteld through the intercession of Maria Jesse in 1327] is the origin of the public holiday, which our pious forefathers commemorated through annual devotion, church services and hymns. We, however, who do not have their virtues, spend our time (and neglect this holiday) by holding parades of the shooters' guilds, by staging plays, drinking and engaging in other impious pastimes.*

It is clear that by the 1530s, or even earlier, the Delft *Ommegang* had accrued a layer of profane festivities that had little or nothing to do with re-

⁵⁶ Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden offer the hypothesis that the older religious name and identity co-existed with a more recent secular one; a similar process took place in other towns of the Netherlands (*op. cit.*, p. 28).

⁵⁷ In the Latin of Vosmeer: 'Siquidem dies festus publicus, quem maiores nostri, religiosi homines, supplicatione annua, sacrisque, et hymnis celebrarunt, originem istam habet. Nos autem virtutis eorum degeneres, militari Pompa, ludis, epulis, aliisque male sanis delicijs producimus et temeramus'. The Latin text and translation are reproduced by Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, [vol. ii], p. 657. Cf. Oosterbaan, *Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 249 and p. 281 n. 330.

ligious devotion. Owing to the nature of these festivities their participants could easily embark on a path of confrontation by disrupting (though not always deliberately) the sacred order of a religious procession. In 1532 the 'gesellen' (i.e. rhetoricians) paraded the 'ship of Saint Reynuut' through the streets during the *Ommegang*. In this case the incident met with the disapproval of the choirmasters who perhaps saw their efforts frustrated by the rowdiness of the players and audience of the profane spectacle ('[...] uutbrachten tscyp van sinte Reynuut, waer tegen de sangmeesters van de Oude Kerk soe veel daer tegens gegeven hebben').⁵⁸

The 'ship of Saint Reynuut' was a variant of the carnivalesque Ship of Fools, a theme well known in the Dutch literature and culture of the late Middle Ages through the activities of 'satirical guilds' (*spotgilden*) such as the 'Guild of the Blue Boat' (*Gilde van de Blauwe Schuit*). Such 'guilds', actually groups of mostly young men (similar to the *charivari*), assembled on Shrove Tuesday (*vastel-* or *vastenavond*) and on the eve of other large religious holidays, especially during spring and autumn. The 'guild of the blue boat' staged a street performance using a real boat to satirize undesirable behaviors. In the case of Reynuut this was especially drunkenness, but other vices such as rowdiness and promiscuity were also held up to ridicule. In the activities of the 'guild of the blue boat' the accepted hierarchy of values was set on its head (vices were ironically represented as virtues). Arguably (this point is raised by H. Pleij), the point of creating a morally inverted world was to bring about a moral *katharsis* which would lead to a restoration of order. That the activities of the *spotgilden* targeted the sacred, e.g. by satirizing the worship of saints, however, cannot be entirely discounted. It is still open to debate to what extent the satirical carnival guilds on the one hand, satirized, and on the other hand propagated actual behaviors opposed to the Christian order of medieval society.⁵⁹

After 1559 rhetoricians were no longer involved themselves in religious holidays in Delft,⁶⁰ but there were signs earlier of their pro-Reformation sympathies. These sympathies expressed themselves most clearly

⁵⁸ Cited after Oosterbaan, *op. cit.*, p. 248.

⁵⁹ The *Narrenschiff* of Sebastian Brandt and the Ship of Fools of Hieronymus Bosch are two treatments of this theme in, respectively, literature and the pictorial arts. For a recent overview of this theme see Pleij, *Het gevleugelde woord*, pp. 270-275. A detailed study of the surviving text related to one of these guilds (The Hague Koninklijke Bibliotheek 75 H 57) is given by Pleij, *Het gilde van de blauwe schuit*. H. Pleij argues that the 'inverted world' served as an instrument of voluntary social discipline (self-policing) in 'Op belofte van profijt', esp. pp. 27-28.

⁶⁰ Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *Met minnen versaemt*, p. 33.

in the figure of Adriaen Pietersz, the formal head (*keizer*) of the Delft chamber who was charged with involvement in 'Lutheranism' in 1531 and again in 1566. Around the year 1539 the authorities tried to suspend the Delft chamber for a period of time to prevent the further spreading of 'Lutheranism'.⁶¹ Crypto-Protestant ideas are very likely to have circulated among the participants of the rhetorical competition held in Rotterdam in 1561.⁶² The question asked of the participants (in the category of morality play – *spel van sinne*) was, 'What is the greatest source of consolation to those who seemed to have been forsaken by God?' ('Wie den meesten troost oyt quam te baten // die schenen te sijn van God verlaten?').⁶³ The answers provided to this question pointed to the instruction conveyed in the Holy Scripture as being of the greatest benefit to those bereft of all hope. Indeed, Scriptural lessons ('schriftuerlijke onderwijsinghen') were advertised on the title leaf of Willem Silvius' edition of the Rotterdam plays (1564). Tellingly, most contributions made hardly any mention of the Church or Sacraments. At the same time it must be said that the volume carried the official approval of the ecclesiastic censor, its contents were therefore clearly not considered heretical.⁶⁴

The Delft play is a good example of the widening space of religious ambiguity on the literary stage of the rederijkers. It opened with what was essentially a review of commonplaces from the Old Testament (from Adam to Jonah) where God was shown providing assistance to a Biblical figure. This was not enough, however, for the play introduced the protagonist 'Schriftuer' ('Scripture') who 'is well known in all chambers of rhetoric' ('[...] in alle camers hy seer wel bekent / is // der Rhetorosijnen...').⁶⁵ 'Schriftuer' then proceeded to give a similar review of examples from the New Testament, mentioning the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary as a sign of the greatest hope, but also passing on to other events, such as the words of Christ to Dismas, and dwelling on St. Stephen the Martyr and St. Mary Magdalen (though without referring to any of these as a saint) or on the Pentecost (with an obvious allusion

⁶¹ Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-55.

⁶² Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-248.

⁶³ *Spelen van Sinne vol schoone allegatien, loflijcke leeringhen ende schriftuerlijke onderwijsinghen*, Antwerp: Willem Silvius, 1564. The Delft *spel van sinne* is on fol. 109v-122r. *Drijderley Refereynen ghepronuncieert opte Rhetorijck-feest der blauwe Acoleyen van Rotterdam*, Antwerp: Willem Silvius, 1564.

⁶⁴ For a discussion of the contents of the plays, with the relevant bibliography, see Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *Met minnen versaemt*, pp. 247-248.

⁶⁵ *Spelen van Sinne vol schoone allegatien*, fol. 116r.

to the Rotterdam chamber 'Met minnen versaemt' which boasted this scene in its emblem).⁶⁶ In the last passages the character 'Goede meening' (which can be roughly translated as 'Good counsel') praised Christ for having delivered mankind from sin: here, however, salvation was described as being achieved 'without our merit or works [...] out of pure grace' ('sonder ons verdienst oft wercken [...] wt puerder ghenaden').⁶⁷ To an attentive listener the latter could leave no doubts as to the Lutheran character of the play. At the same time the presence of quite a few phrases devoutly referring to Virgin Mary could have persuaded the audience that they were listening to a Catholic play.⁶⁸

These literary-religious ambiguities mirrored the troubled political climate in the Netherlands. Amid the uncertainty that prevailed in the early 1560s the strengthened opposition under the Protestant nobles of the Netherlands stepped up their demands with regard to religious toleration. In the 'Petition of Compromise' the Protestant nobles (who became known collectively along with their associates as the *gueux* or 'beggars', the *geuzen*)⁶⁹ successfully pleaded with Margaret of Parma to relax the anti-heresy laws. After Margaret of Parma, inconsistently, agreed to the proposition of the nobles, there followed a resurgence of Protestant activity (the so-called 'Wonderyear') during which Lutheran and Calvinist religious services were openly organized in Netherlandish cities.⁷⁰

Yet as these events unfolded the summer of the year 1566 also witnessed the culmination of the strategy of confrontation in the form of the *Beeldenstorm*. The riots, which erupted with great force, were possibly inspired by the Protestant reaction in England after Elisabeth I ascended to the throne in 1559. A wave of violence against Church property in general, and sacred imagery in particular, rapidly spilled over from cities in the southern Netherlands to the northern provinces, reaching Delft on 24 August 1566. The main altar in the Church of St. Hippolyte was damaged in its entirety,⁷¹ while a mob composed of men and women

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 117v-118v.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 121r.

⁶⁸ See e.g. *ibid.*, fol. 121v.

⁶⁹ 'But before they [i.e. the nobles] had left, they were given the name of *geux*, a French word, apparently formed after the Dutch *guits*, means as much as thief, vagabond or beggar' ('Doch eer se vertrokken, wierd hen de naem van *geux* aengehangen: welk Fransch woordt, gesmeedt schijnende naer het Nederlandtsche Guits, soo veel als fielen, landloopers of beedelaers seggen wil'), Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie*, p. 296.

⁷⁰ Pettegree, 'Religion and the Revolt', pp. 75-76.

⁷¹ Oosterbaan, *De Oude Kerk te Delft*, p. 32.

ransacked the Franciscan cloister which became a special target of aggression.⁷² Peace was restored incrementally in the following days, but a return to the *status quo ante* would prove much more difficult, if not impossible. In January 1567, Protestants obtained a guarantee that they could continue to practice their religion in a designated area, a 'cabbage garden' just outside the city gates ('op een seecker Erff, wesende een Cool-thuyn, gelegen buyten de Waterslootsche Poorte').⁷³ This compromise worked out a formula of religious tolerance which went so far as to restrict the free expression of opinions on either side, Catholic and Protestant, 'in songs, refrains, pasquils, or in any other way' ('met eenige Liedekens, Referijngens, Pasquillen, ofte eenige andere manieren').⁷⁴ The right to Protestant worship was soon rescinded, however, leading to a sense of grievance. The political counter-offensive by the Habsburg authorities materialized, meanwhile, on the national political stage. Philip II's military commander, the duke of Alva, Fernando Álvarez de Toledo, arrived in the Netherlands in August 1567 to restore order by force. The establishment of the Council of Troubles led to trials against the ringleaders of the *beeldenstorm*, most of whom, however, had already fled abroad to Germany and England (of the approximately 10,000 individuals sentenced to death, it is believed that 90 percent were tried *in absentia*).⁷⁵ Meanwhile, William of Orange had left the country. The counts of Egmond and Hornes (both of them Catholics), who had advocated the failed policy of toleration in the years before the *beeldenstorm* and had unsuccessfully tried to persuade Philip II that his strategy of combating heresy was undermining the stability of the Netherlands, were executed in 1568 on charges of treason.⁷⁶

After 1568, owing in part to Alva's repressive measures, the Netherlands were polarized in two camps and ready for war. The religious-political conflict which escalated after the *beeldenstorm* had dealt a death-

⁷² For the iconoclastic riots see e.g. Kuttner, *Het hongerjaar 1566*; The riots in Delft are described by Kok, 'De opkomst van het Protestantisme', pp. 108-113. The Catholic historian Famianus Strada reported the contemporary perception of (and reactions to) the role of women as the driving force behind the desecration of the Franciscan cloister in Delft, Strada, Van Aelst (transl.), *De thien eerste boecken der Nederlantsche oorloghe*, pp. 180-181.

⁷³ A proclamation (*ordonnantie*) to this effect, ascribed to William of Orange, is reproduced by Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, vol. i, pp. 420-423. The cited passage comes from article II, p. 420.

⁷⁴ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 421.

⁷⁵ Pettegree, 'Religion and the Revolt', p. 77.

⁷⁶ Van Nierop, 'The nobles and the Revolt', p. 62.

blow to the prosperity and stability inherited from the reign of Charles V. In the late 16th century the Protestant historian Petrus Bor could look back with undisguised sentiment on the years before the Revolt:

[...] alle d'ongelucken over dese Nederlanden [...] so vele groter schijnen / als men aensiet de gestaltenisse des Lands so die was voor het toekomen deser ongevallen. Want het Nederland en hadde in lange Jaren noyt so in voorspoet / macht / rijkdom / en Coopmanschap toegenomen / als het dede voor de beroerten daer wy van sullen schrijven: want daar was doe in allen den Provincien eenen vasten en goeden vrede / en werde so wel aen ongelegen / onvruchtbare / als aen vruchtbare en wel gelegen oorden en plaetsen dagelijks meer en meer gebout / getimmert / en 't Land over al verbeterd. En de Coopmanschap (d'welk den Rijkdom deser Landen is) nam alle dagen meer en meer toe / en was ook 't selve Nederland met veel trefelijke Regenten en geleerde Mannen / die in alle heerlijke en vernaemde goede Consten en Leeren beroemt waren / verciert in allen den Provincien / Landen ende Steden. Daerom het ook niet ten onrechten by allen Natien seer geroemt en gepresen werde.

[...] all the misfortunes that befell the Netherlands [...] seem even more striking when they are compared to the state of the country before these misfortunes came about. For never in a period of many years had the Netherlands attained greater good fortune, power, affluence and had seen more commercial activity than before the 'troubles'; for peace and stability reigned in all provinces, and with each day increasing numbers of homes were built and more plots of land were cultivated both in remote and infertile places as well as in well-located and fertile ones. And commercial activity (which is the source of wealth in these lands) increased daily; moreover, every province, land and town of the Netherlands could pride itself on many illustrious regents [i.e. civic officials] and learned men reputed for their prowess in the arts and sciences. Therefore it is not without reason that the Netherlands were praised among all other nations.

The early 16th century, described here in retrospect by Bor, was for literature what it had also been for the economy, commerce and learning. The richness of literature (so often produced and addressed to circles of readers under the auspices of the Church) certainly allows us to echo Bor's claims. Now, however, the cultural edifice of the Netherlands was marred by war, and it was conflict, not unity, that would become its dominant feature. After the Dutch Revolt a new chapter opened for the remaining Roman Catholics in Delft who now had to adjust to an entirely new political and cultural configuration.

5. BETWEEN SUPPRESSION AND TOLERATION. CATHOLICS, THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN DELFT AND THE NETHERLANDS AFTER 1572

5.1. THE DUTCH REVOLT: A TURNING-POINT IN THE LIVES OF DUTCH CATHOLICS

'I'm about to speak of a war, not knowing whether to call it a war of the Dutch and Spanish or rather a European one', so began the Italian Jesuit Famianus Strada his account of the Dutch Revolt¹ in *De bello Belgico decas prima* (1632).² Strada (1572-1649), a historian whose narrative reflected the Spanish point of view, was profoundly aware of the wider political and cultural implications of the events he was describing. The long-term impact of the Dutch Revolt indeed extended far beyond the Netherlands. Unquestionably, the most important outcome of the war between the Spanish crown and the rebellious Calvinists, the *geuzen*, in the Netherlands was that it sealed the polarization of the European political and religious arena into two hostile camps, a Catholic one and a Protestant one.³

¹ The Dutch Revolt is the name that modern historians prefer to give to the initial phase (lasting until 1609) of the prolonged conflict traditionally known as the Eighty Years War. For a concise overview of the evolution in thinking about the Dutch Revolt and the Eighty Years War in nineteenth- and twentieth-century historiography see Van Nierop, 'Alva's Throne', p. 30-31. For information on historical terminology related to the period known as the Dutch Golden Age (late 16th-17th century) – see below, **Chapter 7.1.**

² 'Ick beghinne te spreken van eene Oorloghe / by myselfen twijffelende oft ick die / eene Neder-lantsche ende Hispaensche / oft wel eene oorloghe van by kants gheheel Europa / noemen moet'. Strada, Van Aelst (transl.), *De thien eerste boecken der Neder-lantsche oorloghe*, p. 1.

³ Parker, 'The Dutch Revolt and the Polarization of European Politics', p. 58.

Far from being confined to the Netherlands, the Dutch Revolt led to the formation of an independent Dutch Republic, a new state that through its very existence at the center of Europe permanently altered the face of the continent and the world. Yet the Dutch Revolt was, at the same time, a small-scale civil war fought for the possession of individual towns and provinces. As some historians argue, the rebellion of the Protestant Dutch was, properly speaking, a string of local uprisings against the Habsburg authorities, which are collected under the single convenient 'umbrella term' of the Revolt.⁴ It will be useful, therefore, to re-trace the basic stages of that conflict and to give an account of its religious-political consequences in the northern provinces before looking into the position of the Church and individual Catholics in the Netherlands and in Delft.

A watershed date in the evolution of the political climate was certainly the year 1555 when Charles V stepped down as sovereign of the Netherlands in favor of his son Philip II. Charles V was a popular and likeable monarch who had proven to be capable of balancing the interests of the Dutch provinces with those of the rest of his vast empire. In the absence of Philip II, who departed for Spain in 1559, the affairs in the Netherlands were to be managed by a succession of civil servants and by the king's formal representative, the stadholder – this was a promising young nobleman, William of Nassau, who through the assistance of Charles V had recently obtained the principality of Orange in France and with it the coveted title of prince. From this point onward one observes the increasingly rapid disintegration of Habsburg authority in the Netherlands. While the iconoclastic riots of 1566, the execution of the counts of Egmond and Hornes in 1568, or the increasing repression under the duke of Alva (1567-1572) can all be named as significant events of the Revolt, the most important date for Delft (and the whole of Holland) was the year 1572, which, beginning with the landing of the Protestant *geuzen* on 1 April at Brill (Den Briel) in Zeeland, led to the rapid toppling of Habsburg institutions and caused attacks on the Church in large parts of these provinces.

The rejection of Catholic identity by a section of the society of the northern Netherlands during the Dutch Revolt of the 16th century was, therefore, a gradual process as much as an instant rupture. After 1572 communities that were still faithful to the Church suddenly found themselves marginalized⁵ in a no-longer Catholic society and vastly outnumbered.

⁴ 'Introduction' in: Darby (ed.), *The Origins and Development of the Dutch Revolt*, p. 1.

⁵ The marginalization of Catholics and the strategies Catholics devised to improve their position are the main themes of Charles H. Parker's *Faith on the margins*. For

bered by groups that were hostile or indifferent to Catholicism. The single most momentous change in society before and after 1572 occurred, indeed, in the position of the Catholic Church in the Low Countries. Over the course of hardly more than a century, from the early 1500s to the mid-1600s the Netherlands went from being a uniformly Catholic country, with seemingly only a few isolated pockets of anti-Catholic dissent in the largest cities and among the humanist elites, to being a multi-confessional society. By the late 17th century, Catholics in the officially Protestant northern provinces constituted not more than 20% of the general population.⁶

In the early summer of 1572 these consequences of the Revolt were still very distant. On 19 July the States of Holland gathered at Dordrecht, where for the first time the deputies sided with the Revolt and with its informal leader, William of Orange, against Philip II. Delft and Amsterdam were the only large towns that decided not to participate out of loyalty to the king.⁷ From April till July of 1572 Delft had hoped to remain neutral throughout the conflict, refusing to take in a Spanish garrison and relying on a detachment of hired troops. After Maximilian Bossu had withdrawn the Habsburg troops stationed in Rotterdam on 23 July 1572, however, the isolated position of Delft could no longer be maintained.⁸ On 27 July the town authorities decided to open the gates to the local military commander of the *geuzen*, Willem van der Marck, earl of Lumey.⁹ Many prominent Catholics had left Delft even before this date. Amsterdam, Utrecht, Cologne and the southern Netherlands were typical destinations. Martinus Duncanus, the parson of the parish of St. Hippolyte, left first for Rotterdam and thence to Utrecht and Amersfoort which were still securely in Spanish hands.¹⁰ Priests and monks evacuated to towns garrisoned by pro-Habsburg forces, as did the representatives of notable Catholic families.¹¹ Their fears were not unreasonable, because Catholic priests, monks and nuns frequently became the tar-

other recent research on the relations between confessional groups in the Dutch Republic, including Catholics, see esp. Po-Chsia Hsia, Van Nierop (eds.), *Calvinism and religious toleration*.

⁶ This estimate given by Israel, *Dutch Republic*, pp. 640-642.

⁷ Israel, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

⁸ Wijbenga, *Delft*, vol. ii, pp. 19-29.

⁹ Cf. Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, pp. 435-437; Kok, 'Opkomst van het Protestantisme', p. 112.

¹⁰ Van Heussen, *Batavia sacra* [Dutch transl.], p. 222.

¹¹ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 177.

get of repression organized by the *geuzen*. Lumey was responsible for the brutal torture and murder in Den Briel on June 26, 1572, of eleven Franciscans, including two lay brothers, and eight secular priests captured at Gorcum (Gorinchem) in the province of Zeeland. The Martyrs of Gorcum, as they soon came to be called, were murdered because they refused to recant their Catholic faith (especially the belief in the Sacrament of the Eucharist and obedience to the Pope).¹²

The devotion to the martyrs of Gorcum spread through the northern Netherlands thanks to literature produced in the Catholic southern provinces. Accounts of the death of the Gorcum martyrs appeared in print soon after the actual events. The lives of these martyrs were collected first by the Douai theologian Willem Estius (Hesselszoon) in *Historia martyrum Gorcomiensium* (Douai: Balthasar Bellerus, 1603), which soon appeared in a Dutch translation, and next in Petrus Opmeer's magisterial history of the Catholic victims of the Revolt, *Historia martyrum batavicornum sive defectionis a fide maiorum Hollandiae initia* (Cologne: Bernardus Gualterus, 1625).¹³ One of the earliest books of this was the *Waerachtighe historie van de martelaers van Gorcom* ('True history of the martyrs of Gorcum', 1604), a translation by Willem Spoelbergh, a Franciscan from Mechelen, of the Latin treatise of Estius.¹⁴ The Gorcum martyrs were beatified in 1675 by Pope Clement X and canonized by Pius IX in 1865. Already at the turn of the 16th and 17th century, together with other Catholics who laid down their life for the faith, they became the new standard-bearers of the oppressed Catholic religious identity in the northern Netherlands.

The same pattern of deliberate repression and violence targeted specifically against Catholics, especially priests and monks, could be seen in Delft. The Carthusian Joost van Schoonhoven was arrested by a score of militant *geuzen* while trying to leave Delft. When it became clear that Van Schoonhoven did not have the precious items that the *geuzen* were hopeful of finding, he was delivered over to the troops of Lumey, and hanged without trial on the market of Brill on July 31, 1572.¹⁵ A few

¹² Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme in Noord-Nederland*, vol. i, pp. 494-495.

¹³ Opmeer, *Historia martyrum batavicornum sive defectionis a fide maiorum Hollandiae initia*. Cologne: Petrus Henningius and Bernardus Gualterus, 1625.

¹⁴ Estius, Spoelbergh (transl.), *Waerachtighe historie van de martelaers van Gorcom, Meesten-deel al Minder-broeders / die veur het Catholijck gheloove van de ketters ghedoodt zin inden iaere onses Heeren / M.D.LXXII*. Antwerp: Jan Moerentorf, 1604.

¹⁵ Wijbenga, *Delft*, vol. ii, pp. 19-23. Joost van Schoonhoven was widely regarded as a martyr for the faith and therefore denoted as 'blessed' (*de zalige*) despite never having

months later Cornelis Musius, the prior of the Convent of St. Agatha, who had previously been verbally assaulted by the prominent *geuzen* headquartered there, came to the conclusion that it would be better to seek safety in The Hague. Despite having a letter of safe conduct provided to him by William of Orange, Musius was apprehended on orders of Lumey while travelling from Delft to The Hague, tortured and murdered at Leiden on 11 December 1572.¹⁶

In the summer months of 1572 the Calvinist revolution which had swept through the Netherlands gradually found a safe haven in portions of Holland and Zeeland. The civic institutions, social cohesion and economic strength of Holland provided the Calvinist rebels with a stable platform from which to continue the struggle for the possession of the province (as a matter of fact the war in Holland lasted approximately three more years). In the spring of 1574 the lands around Delft were a staging-area for the troops of William of Orange coming to the relief of Leiden, besieged for the second time by a Spanish army led by Valdez. The dikes were cut along the Maas, flooding the fields and allowing a vast relief force to set out by ship from Delft. The city added its own invention to the relief fleet: the 'Ark of Delft' (*Ark van Delft*). This innovative but unwieldy vessel was an armored catamaran powered, remarkably, by a hand-cranked paddle-wheel ('ten werd noch door bomen / noch ook door riemen / noch zeilen gevoert noch geroeyt / dan door raderen die daer binnen in stonden').¹⁷ After the rising water had driven out the Spanish, the entire Dutch relief fleet eventually reached the starved city of Leiden on 3 October, 1574. In late November the last Spanish units evacuated from the region of The Hague to Amsterdam (the last major city in Holland to remain on the Habsburg side, Amsterdam crossed over to the revolt in the autumn of 1578).¹⁸ At a time when the inundation of the countryside spelled famine for the peasant population, Delft and other towns overflowed with refugees driven out

been officially beatified. Cf. Opmeer, *Historia martyrum Batavicum*, pp. 34-38. Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge*, pp. 356-357.

¹⁶ Hensen, 'Musius, (Cornelis)' in: *NNBW*, vol. vi, pp. 1046-1051. A biography of Cornelis Musius is placed alongside those of later canonized Dutch Catholic martyrs of the Revolt in Opmeer's *Historia martyrum Batavicum*, pp. 66-99. Sasbout Vosmeer, the Apostolic Vicar of the Netherlands after the Revolt, strove without success to persuade the Church to beatify Musius, cf. Van Heussen, *Batavia Sacra* [Dutch transl.], p. 214.

¹⁷ Bor, *Oorsprongk, begin ende vervolgh*, p. 556; Wijbenga, *Delft*, vol. ii, pp. 41-42.

¹⁸ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 180-182.

by the war.¹⁹ Meanwhile in the northern Netherlands, since the turnover of 1572 various anti-Catholic measures were being put in place by the factions on the side of the Revolt.²⁰

Such a vast turnaround could not have been achieved without more profound reasons than just the brief reign of terror that the *Geuzen* unleashed on Dutch Catholic clergy after their landing in Den Briel during the spring of 1572, although such events too were highly significant and ominous in their own right. The anti-Catholic reaction in Holland which had been seething under the surface since the mid-16th century and which erupted so openly in 1572, could no longer be reversed. Certainly this reaction was not to be stopped by force of arms; the lost ground could only be reclaimed gradually through missionary activity and pastoral care in areas such as Delft and the Delfland region, where all through the Revolt years there remained a strong core population of Catholic families. In Delft itself a once-vibrant popular Catholicism had been, during the course of the 16th century and even before 1572, gradually and quietly forsaken by a considerable part of the middle-class who 'were still nominally Catholic but had accepted some Protestant notions'.²¹ These 'Protestantizers' (as this group is referred to by some historians)²² provided a stable basis for the new Protestant regime and ensured that the transition of power, especially in the cities, was a swift and irreversible one.

Increasingly, small but well-organized groups of militant Calvinists, many of whom were former *émigrés*, shaped the mood in the towns – 'opinion further polarized; but it was the loyalists who were overwhelmed, gagged and marginalized'.²³ The outbursts of aggression were channelled against unpopular pro-Habsburg regents and their property, but most especially against Catholic churches, resulting in a new wave of iconoclasm. On 3 August 1572 the magistrates handed over the Church

¹⁹ Wijbenga, *Delft*, vol. ii, pp. 42-44.

²⁰ These widely differing measures and policies are discussed by Rogier under the umbrella term of 'Protestantization', *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. i, pp. 493-630. 'Protestantization' is also the term used to describe the religious history of the Netherlands after 1500 by Pieter Geyl, 'De protestantisering van Noord-Nederland', pp. 209-221. For a discussion of this term and recent reactions to Rogier and Geyl see Tracy, 'With and Without the Counter-Reformation', pp. 547-75 and Kooi, 'Popish impudence', esp. p. 78.

²¹ Kaplan, "'Remnants of the Papal Yoke'", p. 654.

²² See Woltjer, *Friesland in hervormingstijd*, pp. 90-104, Duke, *Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries*, pp. 8-10ff. The category of 'Protestantizers' is referred to by Kaplan (basing on Duke and Woltjer), *op. cit.*, p. 654.

²³ Israel, *The Dutch Revolt*, p. 179.

of St. Ursula to the Calvinists.²⁴ This church and the church of St. Hippolyte, appropriated by the Calvinists several months later, were immediately stripped of all sacred artifacts; the works damaged or destroyed included an altar by Willem Danielsz van Tetrode which had been commissioned to replace the one lost in 1566.²⁵

The splendid material signs of Catholic culture, the churches and monasteries, were supported by land endowments which not only provided a source of income to the clergy and to the male and female religious, but also helped finance charitable institutions such as almshouses. After the Revolt, the immovable property of religious institutions was confiscated by the new civic and provincial authorities of the Dutch Republic. The remaining part of this material heritage was put to other use by the Dutch Reformed Church. Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio, the papal nuncio in the Netherlands, wrote:

[...] alle de andere voorleden goederen van de Kerck, zijn van de ketters aengetast, ende gebracht onder de gemeyne middelen. Alleenlijck isser maer een gedeelte van aengeleyt, om haer kettersche Dienaers te onderhouden, en oock een seker getal van jonge lieden, de welcke schier yder Stadt, en lant van alle de Provincien pleeg aen te houden, op de Studien in de Hooge Schole van Leyden in Hollant.²⁶

[...] *all property that had previously belonged to the Church was acquired by the heretics as state property* [the so-called 'Common Means']. *In fact only a part of it was preserved as a source of income for heretic ministers as well as for a certain number of young men whom nearly every town and region of the United Provinces provides with an education at the Academy in Leiden.*

The Academy of Leiden, founded in 1575 as a theological college designed to educate Calvinist ministers, was financed expressly with income from monastic endowments confiscated by the States of Holland.²⁷

William of Orange's decrees guaranteeing religious tolerance and nominally recognizing Philip II as the sovereign had proven useful in delivering Delft and other hesitant towns over to the *geuzen*.²⁸ Under

²⁴ Goudappel, 'Het kerkelijk leven van de Gereformeerden', p. 102.

²⁵ For the second wave of iconoclasm in Delft see Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 448. For a recent look at the fate of precious objects seized from churches and cloisters during the *beeldenstorm*, see Verhoeven, 'Kerkelijk erfgoed in reformatietijd', pp. 12-15.

²⁶ Bentivoglio, Carpentier (transl.), *Verhael-boecken*, pp. 254.

²⁷ Orlers, *Beschrijvinge der Stad Leyden...*, pp. 130-138.

²⁸ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. i, pp. 445-446.

pressure from the Calvinists, however, there followed a gradual reversal of the policies aimed at establishing a permanent religious compromise (*religievrede*).²⁹ In 1573 the States of Holland meeting in conference at Leiden declared the further practice of the Catholic religion illegal. William of Orange, who officially converted to Calvinism from Lutheranism in the same year, expressed support for the action of the States in his *Apology*. The argument of the States, repeated by Orange, stated that Catholics (or 'at the very least the priests') ought to be considered traitors of the state because they had allegedly '[...] sworn an oath of allegiance to the Pope, and believed this to be more important than the oath sworn to their country' ('haeren staet in gevaer stondt van tot een uuterste verdervenisse te kommen, 't en ware dat se [=de Staten] d'exercitie van de Roomsche Religie schorsten ende verboden, om dat de ghene, die die professie van de selve deden, emmers ten minsten de Papen (ghelijck se alomme oock elders doen) eenen anderen eedt aen den Paus hadden, den welcken sy hoogher achteden dan den ghenen dien sy aen haer vaderlandt hadden').³⁰ When the religious toleration advanced by William of Orange in the Netherlands (especially in the southern provinces) eventually proved to be meaningless, the Dutch Revolt out of necessity had to elicit an official reaction from the Church. This reaction came on 15 July 1578 in the form of a brief (*breve*) by Pope Gregory XIII prohibiting Catholics from taking part in the Revolt, more or less ten years after hostilities had broken out in the Netherlands.³¹

The Act of Abjuration of 1581 (*Plakkaat van verlatinge*), by which the States General decreed Philip II to be no longer the sovereign of the Netherlands, was the next step to declaring Catholicism illegal in the northern Netherlands. With legitimacy ensured by judicial means the transition of power was implemented at the level of private property. The homes and private property of Catholic loyalists who had fled into exile were handed over to returning Calvinist refugees. The process by which Catholic property was seized by Protestant exiles and their sympathizers effectively changed the social composition of the city. Urban spaces were appropriated for the new regime under a policy of retribution and rehabilitation that 'explic-

²⁹ The Delft context of William of Orange's *religievrede* is given by Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, esp. p. 437-438. For a modern overview see Pettegree, 'Religion and the Revolt', p. 79.

³⁰ William of Orange, *Apologie, ofte Verantwoordinghe*, p. 70. The same passage is cited in a different translation by Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 448. For the practical outcome of William's *religievrede* see Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. i, pp. 446-448.

³¹ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, p. 31.

itly mirrored Alva's earlier practices'.³² This was especially visible in Delft, where entire housing complexes, such as the former cloister of St. Agatha, were converted into an official residence for William of Orange and his court (as a sign of the times, however, the remaining nuns were allowed to live in the southern wing convent; the last of these nuns died in 1640).³³

The year 1581 was also the one in which the States General of the Netherlands issued their first 'placard' (*plakkaat*) against Catholic worship.³⁴ Anti-Catholic legislation ('placards') prevented Catholics from holding religious gatherings (even in private homes), wearing priestly garments, organizing schools or disseminating Catholic literature. Fines were imposed on this kind of behavior. Later legislation increased the severity of punishment to include the confiscation of property. Gradually these measures were stepped up throughout the provinces.³⁵ Disobedience was punished by a fine of 100 guilders, by no means a small sum of money; this anti-Catholic policy went hand-in-hand with a renewed censorship of 'seditious books, songs, "refrains" and broadsheets'.³⁶ Detection by the local judiciary commonly went hand in hand with (often violent) arrest, interrogation and imprisonment.³⁷

As a rule, while the Catholic Church was persecuted as an institution, individual Catholics were generally not targeted with violence unless they crossed the indefinite line between the public and private sphere, or unless they happened to be priests.³⁸ Some modern historians hold that the Union of Utrecht (1579) – of which the judicial basis had been formulated partially in the Unions of Dordrecht (1575) and Delft (1576)³⁹ – 'protected

³² Janssen, 'Exiles and the Politics of Reintegration in the Dutch Revolt', p. 49.

³³ Kruimink, Schuur, 'Het St. Agathaklooster', pp. 42-43.

³⁴ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. i, pp. 447 and 457.

³⁵ Rogier, *op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 458.

³⁶ 'Ten selfsten dage quam'er in den Hage, op den name van den Prins van Oranjen, als wien nu de Hooge Overheyt was opgedragen, een placcaat uyt, verbiëdende het drukken en verkopen van alle schandaleuse ergerlycke oproerige boekxkens, liedekens, refreynen en nieuwe maren: desgelyks het drukken van andere schriften sonder consent der Magistraat, en naam van den Drucker. Als mede de exercitie der Pausselyke Religie en 't houden der openbare en heymelyke vergaderingen, op verbeurte van 100 gulden'. Brandt, *Kort verhaal van de Reformatie*, p. 123-124.

³⁷ Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, pp. 324-328.

³⁸ This strategy can bring to mind the Biblical saying: 'strike the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered' (Zacharias 13:7).

³⁹ For the 'freedom of conscience' clause in the Union of Delft see Van Bleyswijk, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, vol. i, pp. 467-468. Kajaan, 'De Unie van Delft van 25 April 1576', pp. 7-14.

Catholics and all Dutch people from prosecution for their private religious beliefs'.⁴⁰ However, the legal practice expressed in the placards by which Catholics were actively prevented from acting in accordance with their most fundamental religious convictions as members of the Church, i.e. receiving the Sacraments, going to Mass, etc., all necessarily 'public' activities, rendered the 'freedom of conscience' clause of the Union of Utrecht *de facto* null and void.⁴¹

Contemporaries were aware of the fact that that a discrepancy existed between the declared principle of religious freedom and the actual space allowed to Catholics for the free exercise of their religion. The Catholic polemicist Arnout van Geluwe (1604-c. 1671) wrote from first-hand experience having lived in Delft in the years 1626-1644. He argued that a lack of significant religious freedom violated an essential prerogative of man as a creature of God: 'God created us to serve Christ. But you [=the authorities of the Dutch Republic] refuse us the free practice [of religion]. Therefore, you violate our conscience' ('Godt heeft ons gheschapen om Christo te dienen. Maer ghy beneemt ons al ons vrije exercitie. Ergo ghy dwinght ons in ons ghemoet').⁴² Through this early declaration of the right to freedom of religious worship (an expression of an essential human right), Van Geluwe acknowledged that legal practice in the Dutch Republic in fact constituted a violation of the much-vaunted freedom of conscience offered to its inhabitants. Even though lay Catholics in the Dutch Republic could usually count on the toleration of their (non-public) beliefs, the delegalization of Catholic worship undoubtedly dissuaded vast numbers whose faith was weaker from practising their religion.

The suppression of Catholic worship in the northern Netherlands made for a complex and difficult situation with which the Church somehow had to contend. There is no doubt that the Church was aware of the altered social circumstances under which Dutch Catholics had come to live after 1572. One of the most prominent representatives of the Church who greatly contributed towards increasing this awareness was Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio (1579-1644), the nuncio in the southern Netherlands from 1607 to 1615. Cardinal Bentivoglio was the first high-ranking diplomat of the Holy See who tried to obtain a systematic

⁴⁰ Parker, 'In partibus infidelium', p. 121.

⁴¹ On the practical limitations of the 'freedom of conscience' supposedly guaranteed by the Union of Utrecht see Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, pp. 458-460; this argument is supported by Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, pp. 323-324.

⁴² Van Geluwe, *Kort verhael van een achthien-jarighe Hollandtsche Reyse*, p. 15.

understanding of the position of Dutch Catholics after the Revolt.⁴³ His account, written around 1611, called (in the original Italian) *Relazioni in tempo delle sue nunziature* (1629) is a unique source on the general position of Catholics in the Dutch Republic and on the changing identity of the northern Netherlands after the Revolt. It was collected together with other accounts, including Bentivoglio's report on his stay as a Nuncio in France (1616-1621) as *Relationi del Cardinale Bentivoglio* (Venice: Marco Ginammi, 1636). It is probably this edition that was translated by Roeland de Carpentier, a Dordrecht magistrate possibly sympathetic to the Catholic cause, as *Verhael-boecken Van den Cardinael Bentivoglio* ('Histories of Cardinal Bentivoglio'; Rotterdam: Joannes Naeranus, 1648), with the *Relazioni* included under the Dutch title *Verhael van de Vereenigde Provincien van Nederlant* ('Story of the United Provinces of the Netherlands').⁴⁴

Religious tradition and religious identity played a significant part in Bentivoglio's understanding of the Netherlands. The nuncio saw a vivid contradiction between the Catholic heritage of the medieval Netherlands and the violent reaction of the Protestant Dutch against the Catholic Church during and after the Revolt:⁴⁵

In alle [Provincien] bloeyde in voorige tijden, een besondere eerbiedigheyt voor den Goddelijcken yver, en de heylige saecken. Groot was over al het getal van de Kercken, en van de Cloosters, en overgroot in't gemeyn de Godtvruchtigheyt van het volck. De aen-geboren eenvoudigheyt van hare gewoonten wierde insgelijcks verselt met een seer suyvere oprechtigheyt van Godts-dienst; oock de Jonck-vrouwen waren uytermate en besonderlijk genegen tot het Clooster-leven.⁴⁶

In every [Province] there was in the past a special respect for religious ardor and for holy things. Everywhere there were many churches and monasteries and the people, in general, were very pious. The native simplicity of their

⁴³ For a bibliography of contemporary mission reports detailing the position of Catholics in the Dutch Republic after 1572 see Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. iii, p. 69.

⁴⁴ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *Verhael-boecken Van den Cardinael Bentivoglio: Vertaelt en uyt-gegeven door Roelant de Carpentier*. Rotterdam, Joannes Naranus, 1648. This edition contains: G. Bentivoglio, R. de Carpentier, *Verhael van de Vereenigde Provincien van Nederlant, gedaen door den Cardinael Bentivoglio, Ten tijde van zijn Gesantschap by de Doorluchtigste Aerts-Hertogen Albertus en Vrouwe Isabella, Infante van Hispanien*. Rotterdam: Joannes Naeranus, 1648.

⁴⁵ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 248-249.

⁴⁶ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 253.

customs went together with a pure sincerity in matters of religion: the young women, too, were very much inclined to monastic life.

The policy of Protestantization is the key to understanding Bentivoglio's assessment of the changes that were taking place in the religious landscape of the Dutch Republic after the Revolt. Bentivoglio had no doubt that the Dutch religious-political order after the Revolt relied on the subordination of religion to the state in a pattern that repeated itself in each following country that took on a new Protestant religion:

De Vereenigde Provincien doende in deser voege, den Godts-dienst dienen aen de staet, naer wijze van de andere ketters, namen aen de gesintheit van Calvijn over al, en wilden dat die alleenlijck de heersende oeffeninge soude hebben, en dat in tegendeel, t'eenemael onderdruckt soude blijven, voor soo veel als sy vermochten, de Roomsche Catholijkschen Godts-dienst, de welcke soo vele eeuwen lang alleen, en in groote ruste onder haer hadde gebloeyt.⁴⁷

The United Provinces, subjecting religious service to the state after the manner of other heretics, took on the denomination of Calvin, and decided that this one alone enjoyed the utmost freedom of worship, whereas the Roman Catholic religion, by contrast, would remain suppressed, even though it had flourished there in peace for many centuries.

As a result of the fact that the Calvinists abrogated for themselves the right to become a public Church under the protection of the state, the Roman Catholic Church in the northern Netherlands, deprived of the right to public worship, had been forced to submit to a secret underground existence ('De Roomsche Catholijcksche oeffeninge is gantsch en gaer verborgen in de Vereenigde Provincien [...] en is van noode die te genieten t'eenemael heymelijck, en steels-wijse').⁴⁸ Under those circumstances there appeared the specifically Dutch phenomenon of the clandestine church or chapel, the *schuilkerk*, disguised on the outside as a private home and often situated, for reasons of safety and convenience, within an essentially Catholic urban housing complex.⁴⁹ In Delft one of these complexes was the former beguinage (*Bagijnhof*). After 1572 the beguinage served as home to the Catholic priests Johannes Faber,

⁴⁷ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 248-249.

⁴⁸ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 252.

⁴⁹ On the subject of *schuilkerken* see esp. Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, pp. 686-690; Van Eck, *Kunst, twist en devotie: Goudse katholieke schuilkerken 1572-1795*.

Cornelis Duijst (a Jesuit) and Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele; a permanent chapel was established there in the 1630s.⁵⁰ The (clandestine) Jesuit church, which Johannes Vermeer probably attended in the mid-17th century, was located at the Oude Langendijk, in a quarter called the *Papenhoek* ('Popish [i.e. Catholic] corner').⁵¹

Yet even though the religious order tended to strongly privilege the Calvinist denomination above all others, Bentivoglio recognized the diversity of the newly-formed Protestant religious landscape in the Dutch Republic. Besides the Calvinists, whose doctrine was, consequently, 'dominant among the people of the United Provinces' ('De Calvijsche leere [...] heerst evenwel in tegenwoordigheyt onder 't volck van de Vereenigde Provinciën'), the Lutherans (*Luythers-gesinden*), Anabaptists (*Wederdoopers*) and remnants of the mid-16th century sect of David Joris (*Davidionisten*) were mentioned as the other important Protestant religious groups.⁵²

The Calvinists, especially immigrants, were the most effective in securing the sympathies of the ordinary Hollanders for the Dutch Reformed Church:

Het geringste volckje is het meeste besmet; maer noch meer dat gedeelte van vreemt volck, dat in't begin van de afvallinge van Nederlant, uyt de Catholijksche Provincien, vluchten in de Vereenigde Provincien, om te mogen opentlijck leven in de ketternije.⁵³

The simplest folk are the most infected [by Calvinism], but even more so are those groups of strange folk who fled, at the beginning of the rebellion, from the Catholic Provinces [i.e. the Habsburg Netherlands] into the United Provinces in order to be able to live there openly in heresy.

Calvinism, in Bentivoglio's view, therefore was not the religion of the average Dutch person but rather an imported product that had found favor with cosmopolitan political elites. It was, in short, a religion of the allochthonous population: foreigners and immigrants. The exception were the most impoverished and dispossessed Dutch who numbered among the strongest adherents of 'precise' (i.e. orthodox) Calvinism. The importation of Calvinism from France, England and Germany cemented the rebellion in the Netherlands:

⁵⁰ Kok, 'Het katholiek leven binnen de stad Delft', pp. 109-111.

⁵¹ Abels, 'Kerk en religie in het leven van Johannes Vermeer', p. 75.

⁵² Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *Verhael-boeckken*, p. 249.

⁵³ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 252.

De gesintheiden zijn veel, aen de welcke de [...] Provinciën plaetse gegeven hebben; maer die evenwel van de Calvinisten, is de gesintheidt die in 't gemeyn heerst, en die het gebiedt in de handt heeft. Aen dese meer dan aen eenige andere, wilden haer de Vereenigde Provinciën begeben, om datse voornamelijk opgehouden waren met de wapenen vande selve haer afvallinge, door middel van geduyrige hulpen van volck, met de Calvijnsche leere besmet, het welcke sy bekomen hadden van Vranckrijck en Engelandt. En de Princen die van de zijde van Duytslant, hare af-vallinge gunste hadden toe-gedragen waren oock schier alle Calvijns-gesinden.⁵⁴

There are numerous denominations that can be found in the Provinces, but the Calvinist denomination is the most prevalent and its representatives have control over this region. The United Provinces submitted to this denomination more than to any other because their rejection of the faith was backed up by the arms that they received from France and England owing to the unfailing assistance of individuals infected with the Calvinist doctrine. And the princes of Germany, who favored their revolt, were nearly all Calvinists.

Bentivoglio concluded, almost as an afterthought, that the Dutch turned to Calvinists throughout Western Europe in order to secure political and military backing for the rebellion. The Calvinist religion was therefore, to Bentivoglio, the outcome and not the main cause of the uprising.

Another noteworthy religious group in the Dutch Republic were the Anglo-Dutch Puritans, immigrants who rejected the state control over the Reformed church:

De gesuyverde werden aldaer mede verdragen, de welcke de alder-suyverste en hardste Calvijns-gesinde zijn, de welcke niet en willen erkennen, eenige macht van de Borgerlijke Magistraten over het gebiedt van haer kettersche Predicanten; en dit zijn schier alle Puriteynen uyt Engelandt, die door de gelegentheyt van de koophandeling, Hollant en de andere Vereenigde Provinciën hanteeren.

The Puritans are tolerated there too; these are the most pure and rigid Calvinists, who do not want to recognize the power of the civil magistrates over the authority of their heretic ministers: nearly all of these are Puritans from England, who come to Holland and the United Provinces as merchants.

The Puritans or 'English Separatists' had settled in Amsterdam and Leiden. A small group led by William Bradford, a Puritan who had been living in the Dutch Republic since 1608, eventually sailed from Delfshaven in 1620 aboard the ship *Speedwell* to Southampton, and from there, aboard the *Mayflower*, bound for the English colonies in Virginia.

⁵⁴ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 248.

This expedition was partly facilitated by the English Merchant Adventurers whose Dutch staple port in the years 1621-1635 was located in Delfshaven. Bradford's group, known to American history as the 'Pilgrim Fathers', arrived in Massachusetts where they founded the colony of Plymouth Plantation, thereby putting in place a bridge between the Calvinism of the Old and the New World.⁵⁵

The Catholics of the Dutch Republic (according to Bentivoglio) found a united adversary in the Dutch Protestant denominations. The Catholics in the United Provinces had to endure the enmity of the denominations descended from the Reformation for even though the Protestants were divided among themselves, they were said to act in unison whenever they intended to attack the Catholic Church ('En alhoewel tusschen d'een en d'andere, het onderscheyt seer groot is, als oock de verdeylinge, verbinden sy haer nochtans gesamentlijck seer licht, om altoos te versorgen alle schade aen de Roomsche Catholijcksche...').⁵⁶

5.2. BETWEEN SUPPRESSION AND TOLERATION: THE POSITION OF CATHOLICS IN THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

The most fundamental political identity of the protestantized Dutch elites which had emerged as an outcome of the Revolt was a desire to protect 'freedom'. Defending 'freedom' was identified with upholding the 'ancient privileges' of the towns and the nobility against the demands of a higher-placed sovereign. From municipalities, through provinces, to the States General – governance on each level of the Republic (except the stadholderate, which remained tied to the house of Orange) was in the hands of aristocratic families or factionalized urban oligarchies. These oligarchies came to be called the 'regents' (*regenten*), and in certain contexts *politiques* or *libertijnen* (the latter was a derogatory term bestowed by the Calvinists on non-Calvinist Protestants).⁵⁷ In the first decades af-

⁵⁵ Okkema, 'Delfshaven', pp. 98-99.

⁵⁶ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 250-251.

⁵⁷ The term 'politique' in the Dutch religious-political arena took its origins from an identical term that was pejoratively applied in France between c. 1560 and c. 1590 by Catholics and Protestants alike to those who '[...] due to a lack of religious zeal and piety, were willing to subordinate religious purity to desired political ends'; historians now generally agree that the French 'politiques' were not advocates of toleration by the state but rather of 'religious concord – that is, uniting the kingdom around shared reli-

ter 1572 the regent class was composed mainly of individuals who were no longer Catholic but not quite (or not yet) Calvinist. The Land's Advocate Johan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547-1619) and the Delft-born jurist and politician Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) can be credited with maintaining this 'middle position' to which the Dutch Republic owed much of its admittedly unintentional religious pluralism.⁵⁸

The political identities of the Holland city-dwellers were aligned with the main religious-political factions which in turn descended from the groups most closely engaged on the side of the Dutch Revolt. The relationship of 'freedom' to 'religion' had been one of the main ideological themes of the Dutch Revolt. When the Leiden town council issued a provisional currency during the siege of 1574, the motto on the paper coins stated that the Revolt was being fought to preserve civil freedom: *haec libertatis ergo*. This notion was strongly opposed, however, by the Calvinist clergy. A Dutch Calvinist pastor in Leiden declared that the motto should have been *haec religionis ergo*.⁵⁹ In this way the Calvinists emphasized that the Revolt was fought for the freedom of the Calvinist religion. The place of the Calvinist religion – its relation to and status within the state – was therefore, as can be easily imagined, always a matter of the highest concern for both the civil government and, of course, for the Dutch Reformed Church itself. On this issue, however, there was little unanimity.

Regarding the question of the balance of ecclesiastic and civil prerogatives the Protestant elites which had led the Dutch Revolt diverged

gious principles (Manetsch, *Theodore Beza*, pp. 94-95, n.6). For a similar view see Holt, *French Wars of Religion*, p. 109.

The term *libertijn* was bestowed by Calvinists on non-Calvinist protestants, especially those of the less dogmatic Remonstrant faction. In the Holland context the *libertijnen* are sometimes treated as synonymous with Erasmian biblical humanists (e.g. Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, p. 498). Other authors use the term *politique* for the group of Protestantized but non-churchgoing or only nominally Calvinist regents (e.g. Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 373). For more on the *libertijnen* and the political affiliations of this group, see Kaplan, "Remnants of the Papal Yoke": Apathy and Opposition in the Dutch Reformation', pp. 653-669.

⁵⁸ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. i, p. 498. The interpenetration of politics and religion in the Dutch Republic is described by Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, esp. pp. 263-351 and Abels, 'Tussen gewetensvrijheid en kerkelijke dwang', pp. 287-329; for the conflict between the Arminians and Gomarists (ca. 1600-1619) see esp. Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*.

⁵⁹ Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie*, vol. i, pp. 553-554. Also cited in Van Bleyswijk, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, vol. i, p. 467; For the context see also Koppenol, *Leids heelal*, p. 31.

around the year 1600 into two broad confessional-ideological camps, depending on their support of the Dutch Reformed Church: the 'Calvinists' (Gomarists) and the 'Remonstrants' (Arminians).⁶⁰ A consequence of this division was that during the first decade of the 17th century two dominant power centers crystallized in the Dutch Republic. One of these emerged around Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, who was a spokesman for the interests of the Remonstrant faction. The other group formed around the Stadholder of Holland and Zeeland, prince Maurice of Nassau, on whom the orthodox Calvinist opposition to Oldenbarnevelt gradually came to pin their hopes. Each of these camps eventually numbered among its adherents people from all social strata and each was characterized to some degree by specific economic interests. The dividing line between the parties (apart from doctrinal matters and the desired degree of state involvement in the Church) was also staked out by the issue of continuing the war with Spain.⁶¹ The printing presses produced vast amounts of polemical literature, in which opinions and characters were relentlessly debated, distorted and denounced. At the same time the identity of the Dutch Republic, mythologized and perpetuated through literature and art, took on a shape that, strongly impacted as it was by the Dutch Reformed vision of history and society, had little to offer Roman Catholics living in the northern Netherlands.⁶²

Hugo Grotius called the Calvinists an 'ecclesiastic' faction led by Calvinist ministers.⁶³ The Calvinists sought to test the policy of the burgher oligarchs on the touchstone of the doctrine and discipline of the Dutch Reformed Church. They did not endorse a theocratic government, however; what they did consider essential for their own side was that the

⁶⁰ Both factions, the Remonstrants (Arminians, called so after Jacobus Arminius), sometimes referred to as *libertijnen* or *politiques*, and the Calvinists (Counter-Remonstrants or Gomarists, after Franciscus Gomarus) were in fact, theologically speaking, quite similar, sharing most elements of Calvinist theology, only disagreeing on the subject of predestination and church government. Cf. Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein ver-mogen*, pp. 304-305.

⁶¹ A broad political panorama contextualizing these issues in period ca. 1600-1630 is provided by Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, esp. pp. 227-345.

⁶² The rise of Dutch pamphlet literature as an instrument of political and religious persuasion during the Revolt (the phenomenon of the 'paper war' – *papieren oor-log*) is examined by Szymtka, 'Retoryka w praktyce', pp. 224-227; a classic review of this theme is Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic*; a bird's-eye view of Dutch pamphlet literature with specific examples is presented by Dingemanse, *Rap van tong, scherp van pen*. See also Geurts, *De Nederlandse Opstand in de pamfletten*.

⁶³ Grotius, *Verantwoordingh*, p. 29.

matters of the church be solely left to the discretion of ecclesiastic bodies. The Calvinist ministers were actually proponents of a separation of church and state, arguing that the government had no right to interfere in policies regarding doctrinal or organizational matters, such as deciding on conflicting points of theology, appointing or dismissing ministers, or calling synods. Moreover, Reformed ministers considered the governing elites, all of whom professed the Dutch Reformed faith, to be no different from other congregants, who (once admitted to the congregation) were required to accept, formally and practically, the church's discipline on moral and doctrinal matters.⁶⁴

The town governments, the provincial States, and the States General were therefore tacitly expected to bring their actions in line with what the active members of the Reformed Church considered to be the right policy. The proper way to achieve this, however, was not institutional, through administrative oversight, but personal, through the public conformity of each individual to the Reformed faith.⁶⁵

Although the States of Holland pledged to uphold the Reformed religion, the zeal to enforce this pledge in daily practice was often found to be lacking among the political elites. The Reformed clergy often came to suspect those in government, not without good reason, of subordinating their religious beliefs to considerations of political pragmatism.⁶⁶ What the Reformed theologians believed to be opportunistic behavior appeared to the burgher-government of Holland to be a necessary compromise. Grotius, a non-Calvinist Protestant and an outspoken representative of the Holland regents, summed up how each side perceived the other:

[...] de Theologanten alle saecken van Religie hoogh ghewoon zijn te weghen / als waer in haer wetenschap ende uytneementheydt boven andere Persoonen bestaat. De Overheyden ter andere zijde / lettende op de rust vande Republijcque / meenen / dat in vele van die saken / sonder Verbreecking van Godes Wet / eenighe redelijcke accommodatie kan vallen: waer uyt dan dickmael gebeurt / dat de Theologanten de Regierders uyt krijten / als Luyden dien de Goddelijcke Waerheydt niet ghenoech ter herte en gaet. De Regierders ter contrarie den Kerckelijcken / als onghewoelijcke Persoonen.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ Membership in the Reformed Church was voluntary, but once a member, one was obliged to abide by the rules, see Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, pp. 291-297.

⁶⁵ For the enforcing of church discipline (*kerktucht*) in Reformed congregations see Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, pp. 299-300.

⁶⁶ Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, pp. 218-226.

⁶⁷ Grotius, *Verantwoordingh*, p. 29.

[...] *the theologians place a high store by all matters of religion, as though, through learning and excellence, they were placed above all other persons. The members of government, on the other hand, in their wish to preserve peace in the Republic, believe that some reasonable latitude ought to be allowed in many things without violating the laws of God. But ever so often it happens that the theologians take those in government to task for resisting God's truth. The government, conversely, accuse the churchmen of being inflexible.*

The other faction opposed to the orthodox Calvinists, mentioned by De Groot, were the *politijcquen* (the *politiques*), a group comprised mainly (though not exclusively) of confessionally non-aligned Protestantized bourgeois regents together with their families and political clients who sympathized (after 1608) with the Remonstrant faction.⁶⁸ Around the year 1600 the *politiques* held the keys of political office in the Dutch Republic as members of the civic councils (the *vroedschappen*), the provincial States and the States General.

In contrast to the strict Calvinists, the *politiques* believed the sovereignty of the provinces, and their freedom from outside interference to have been the main aim of the Rebellion. This principle, for them, entailed the right of the provinces to reach sovereign decisions in questions of religion. As a result the *politiques* rejected the notion that the church could autonomously arrange its own affairs within the state. On the same premise the *politiques* contested the Calvinist faction's claim to be the arbiter of political decisions made by the civil government. In this respect the demands of an absolute egalitarianism, imposed by the structure of Reformed congregations, clashed with the stratification of Dutch society around 1600, especially when the congregants included the governing elites, who, quite naturally, were eager to avoid having to account for their policies in front of a public assembly.⁶⁹

The *politique* camp sought to maintain the absolute supremacy of the civil institutions over ecclesiastic ones. Unlike the Calvinists, the *politiques* considered the Reformed church to be not as much a guardian of a pure doctrine, as an open civil institution which, they hoped, would have a beneficial influence on the morals of society in a vaguely Christian, non-doctrinal spirit:

[...] *het Woordt Reformatie ofte Ghereformeerde Religie, by de Politijcquen is ghenomen / in een anderen sin / als by de Kerckelijcken: alsos vele Ker-*

⁶⁸ Grotius, *Verantwoordingh*, p. 32.

⁶⁹ Cf. Van Deursen, *Bavianen en slijkgeuzen*, pp. 193-217ff.

ckelijcken daer door verstonden een over-een-stemminghe in alle Pointen met hare Leeraers: de Politijcquen een dienst Godes gesuyvert van grove abuysen / ende voorts in 't stuck van ghevoelen over disputable Pointen niet al te nauw zijnde ghelimateert: om welcke ambiguïteyt te ontgaen / de Politijcquen dickmael liever hebben ghehadt te seggen de *Christelijcke* ofte *Euangelische Religie*...⁷⁰

[...] the word 'Reformation' or 'Reformed Religion', is taken by the *politiques* to mean something different than it does to the ecclesiastics, since many ecclesiastics understand by it a unity of opinion on all points with their teachers, while for the *politiques* it is the worship of God, purified of gross errors, and not too narrowly defined with regard to controversial points of doctrine; therefore, to remove this ambiguity, the *politiques* have often preferred to call it the 'Christian' or 'Evangelical Religion'...

These political-confessional groups eventually moved further apart in the early 1600s, when new divisions arose within the Dutch Reformed Church between the Arminians (or Remonstrants) and the Gomarists (or Counter-Remonstrants). Political-confessional conflicts between these factional camps and their descendants remained a constant rift in the political landscape of the Dutch Republic during the entire 17th century.

What consequences did all this have for the Catholics in the protestantized world of the Dutch Republic after 1572? The actual toleration which permitted a limited practice of the Roman Catholic religion depended very much on the willingness and ability of the *politiques* to ignore the demands of the Calvinists. The *politique* ideal of church-state relations was individual freedom of belief in the context of total state control over religious life. This was most especially evident with regard to the 'public' Reformed Church. The States of Holland, under Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, interfered in the interpretation of contentious religious points and tried to have a say in the appointment of Calvinist ministers. In a different way the same principles were applied to other churches as well. The Dutch 'toleration' of Catholic worship, that is to say the unwillingness of local authorities to implement the anti-Catholic laws, was in many ways a side-effect of this model. This manner of 'toleration' was the norm in most Holland cities, and certainly in Delft, which counted as a 'Remonstrant' town.⁷¹ It stemmed from the notion, developed by

⁷⁰ Grotius, *Verantwoordingh*, p. 30.

⁷¹ The Delft mayor Gerrit Jansz van der Eyck was one of the members of a delegation headed by Hugo de Groot who petitioned the magistrates of Amsterdam in 1616 not to give their support to the Counter-Remonstrants. See [Grotius], *Verhael vande*

Hugo Grotius and other Dutch thinkers, that the 'sovereign' States of the provinces of the Netherlands had the exclusive right to grant varying degrees of religious 'freedom', whereas the individual religious groups had no choice but to accept the 'freedoms' that were offered to them.

Hugo Grotius, who came from a patrician family of first-generation Protestants in Delft, argued that a harmonious civil society could very well exist even when there were differences in religious opinions: '[...] de rust vande Politie wel kan behouden werden / oock daer verscheydenheydt is van Religie'.⁷² Any attempt by the government to change this caused '[...] great unrest and unease among the inhabitants, the loss of trade, the violation of many consciences' ('[...] groote onrust ende onghemack van hare Ghemeente / tot verdrijf van neeringhe / tot quetsinge van vele conscientien').⁷³

For Grotius, unlike for the Calvinists, religion was never the true cause of the Revolt. The real reason, as Grotius insisted, was political freedom from Spanish 'tyranny'. The Revolt was fought under the banner of defending legal and judicial continuity in the sovereign provinces:

'T fundament van 't Oorlogh moet notoirlijck zijn 'tfundament vande Unie / alsoo de Unie is aenghegaen om met ghemeene macht voor te staen / het ghene waerom het Oorlogh was aenghenomen: De rechte oorsaeck / waerom de Wapenen zijn aenghenomen / is gheweest de Conservatie van een vrye Nederlandtsche Regieringhe / na de oude Wetten / Coustuymen ende Privilegien / jegens de nieuwe Spaensche dominatie / ende daer benevens Vryheydt van conscientie / waer onder buyten twijffel sonderlingh is begrepen de Vryheyte vande Ghereformeerde Religie.⁷⁴

The justification for going to war must necessarily be the justification for establishing the Union, since the Union was signed with a view to upholding, with joint strength, that which had been the cause of war: the true reason why men took to arms was to preserve the free Dutch government, in accordance with the old laws, customs and privileges, against the new Spanish domination, and apart from that, to defend freedom of conscience, which without any doubt extends above all to the freedom of the Reformed religion.

Heeren Joncker Adrian van Mathenes [...] by de Moghende Edele Heeren / mijn Heeren de Staten van Hollant ende West-Vrieslant / in hare Vergaderinge gehouden in Aprili seshienhondert seshien gedeputeert / om de E. Heeren Burgemeesteren ende Raden van Amsterdam te onderrichten... s.n., s.l., 1622.

⁷² Grotius, *Verantwoordingh*, p. 27.

⁷³ Grotius, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

⁷⁴ Grotius, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

In spite of the latter provision Grotius decided that religious policy had no part in the 'common policy' of the Union. The act establishing the Union of Utrecht (this was, as Grotius called it, a 'closer union' or *naerder Unie*) specified in its Article 13 that the States of Holland and Zeeland were free to regulate such matters on their own according to the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*: 'Ende aangaande t' point van de Religie, sullen haar die van Hollandt ende Zeelandt draghen na haar-luider goedtduncken'.⁷⁵ Provinces where Catholic worship was retained could join the Union. Moreover, no province or town was allowed to exert pressure on the others in matters of religion.⁷⁶ So, on paper at least, were the province of Holland to proclaim equal freedom for all religions (and therefore freedom of Catholic worship), it could proceed to do so without violating in any way the terms of the Union of Utrecht.

The States, according to Grotius, had the right of disposition over the property of the Roman Catholic Church in the Netherlands. That, of course, was what happened during the Dutch Revolt, but now Grotius' ideas became allied to the secularist statecraft of the Remonstrant regents who sought to construct a state-run Protestant church in the Netherlands as well as to bring all other churches under the control of the provincial States governments. Grotius' argument was that the churches in Holland and the other provinces before the Revolt had not, in fact, been Catholic but 'public churches' ('publijcque Kercken'). Since they were civic institutions, so it was only natural, Grotius claimed further, that the assemblies of Holland and Zeeland had the right to turn them over to the Calvinists for Reformed worship if they decided that this was for the public good.⁷⁷

Grotius staked out his argument for the States' control over religion by claiming that never in the past did the province of Holland cede its sovereignty over the church to some 'other sovereign': 'Ick en vinde niet / dat oyt Souverainen (gelijck de Nederlandsche Provincien zijn) de dispositie van de Religie met andere souverainen hebben ghemeen ghemaect'.⁷⁸ Such notions are perhaps the most characteristic of the situation that Dutch Catholics had to contend with in the early 1600s at the hands of Remonstrant regents. Although the regents advocated limited tolerance for the sake of public peace and some, like Grotius, even admitted that there was a basis for the freedom to public worship for all reli-

⁷⁵ Grotius, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷ Grotius, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

⁷⁸ Grotius, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

gious groups in society, they nevertheless believed that the States, not the religious groups, were the supreme arbiters in matters of religion. If Remonstrant regents like Grotius were more 'tolerant', in a sense, of Catholic worship, in that they acknowledged (unlike the orthodox Calvinists), that all religions ought to enjoy some freedom of worship, they nevertheless saw this freedom not as an intrinsic right of those religions but as an offshoot of the 'sovereignty principle' of the States. In the end Grotius rejected the Calvinists' aim of creating a narrow church community for the elect by advancing the rather striking idea that individual confessions should dissipate into theologically-indeterminate religious communities constructed under the mantle of the state:

[...] een Tolerantie niet simpelijck Politijque / maer Kerckelijcke / dat is / soodanighe waer door de opinie vry staende een weder-zijde onder een bequame manier van Leeringhe tot stichtinghe aengerecht / die van beyde de gevoelens / soo Lidmaeten / als Predicanten / soude blijven in eene Kerckelijcke Ghemeenschap / onder de ghemeene protectie / ende maintentie vande Overheydt.⁷⁹

[...] a tolerance not merely political, but ecclesiastic, that is to say, such a one that, the opinions being free, and each side teaching theirs in a proper, elevating way, those of both persuasions, the members of the congregation as well as the ministers, should be permitted to remain in a single ecclesiastical community, under the protective mantle of the government.

The views of Grotius and his group of *politique* associates were, however, far from prevalent. Religious toleration, in the true sense of the word, encountered an impassable barrier in the general assumption that '[...] religious unity was foundational to a stable political and social order'.⁸⁰ It is no small wonder, then, that those contemporaries who shared the latter view found little to their liking in the Dutch Republic.

'A schism in the church countenanced and maintained by faction in the state'⁸¹ were the words that Sir Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador at The Hague, used to describe the situation in the Netherlands to his superiors in Whitehall in the year 1616, at the height of the conflict between the Remonstrant and Counter-Remonstrant factions of Dutch Protestants. When James I of England offered to Carleton his observations on the condition of the Dutch Republic, he expressed the opinion that the partizan conflicts polarizing the Dutch could only lead '[...]

⁷⁹ Grotius, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

⁸⁰ Parker, 'In partibus infidelium', p. 121.

⁸¹ Carleton, *Letters*, p. 163.

sooner or later to the ruin and subversion of their state'.⁸² The essence of this outlook on Dutch politics (which the English shared with the bulk of the Calvinists and, eventually, with the Holland stadholder Maurice of Orange) was that factionalism represented a polity in imbalance. A plurality of opinion was a luxury that the nascent Dutch state could not afford. The internal strain might prove too strong, and the Republic would collapse in chaos. Therefore, although the Dutch society of the 17th century became 'the most pluralistic religious environment in Western Europe',⁸³ one has to remember that for the Calvinist Dutch and for their foreign allies all political and confessional differences appeared, at the very least, as a malaise in need of a cure. It is not surprising that one way to implement some degree of religious unity in the confessionally-heterogeneous Dutch Republic led through the active or passive persecution of the Catholic religion.⁸⁴

A prominent feature of the new Dutch religious order was the prohibition placed on Roman Catholics and on members of religious denominations other than the Dutch Reformed Church with regard to the right of holding public religious assemblies. Priests were persecuted ('especially in Zeeland', wrote Bentivoglio) with greater violence than ordinary Catholics.⁸⁵ Roman Catholics resorted to clandestine religious services in private homes:

Daer en werdt nochtans geen gemeyne oeffeninge toe-gestaen in de Steden, dan aen de *Calvijns*-gesinden [...] ofte men verwilligt niet, datter andere leere openbaerlijck in haer Scholen geleert wert, als dese van haer gesintheit. Alle de andere, werdt de oeffeninge toegestaen in de besondere huysen; die evenwel konnen genomen werden als gemeyne, dewijle daer gepredickt wert in wijde plaetsen, en die alle toeloop konnen vatten.⁸⁶

The right to hold public religious assemblies in the cities is prohibited for all except the Calvinists [...] and no other doctrine except [Calvinism] may be taught in schools. All the other [religious denominations] are allowed to hold religious services in private houses; these can often be taken for public ones, especially when a sermons are given in open spaces that can accommodate large crowds of people.

⁸² Carleton, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

⁸³ Parker, 'In partibus infidelium', p. 121.

⁸⁴ Article 36 of the Calvinist Belgic Confession (*Confessio Belgica*) imposed on the secular government an obligation to combat all 'false religion' and 'idolatry'. See Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, p. 474; Kooi, 'Popish impudence', p. 77.

⁸⁵ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *Verhael-boecken*, p. 255.

⁸⁶ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 250.

Such large gatherings, which indeed often crossed the vaguely defined boundary between the private and the public, were commonplace in the Holland countryside where entire villages remained Catholic. All the same such assemblies in the cities, as well as the meetings in private homes, were not without risks. Catholic worshippers were harassed whenever the local governments were galvanized into action by the Calvinist consistories alarmed at displays of 'popish [i.e. Catholic] impudence' (*paapse insolentiën* or *paapse stoutigheden*). The measures the authorities took to break up Catholic worship, however, were hardly ever considered adequate by the Calvinists, who complained, for example, about sheriffs (*schouten*) giving advance warning to Catholics about upcoming raids on clandestine churches and chapels (*schuilkerken*).⁸⁷

Whenever the toleration of Catholic worship did occur as part of the general climate of pluralism, it was hardly an expression of disinterested good-will towards Catholics. On the contrary, toleration thrived owing to the rampant practice of extorting money from Catholics in exchange for 'looking the other way'. In most areas Catholics had to pay a regular contribution (the so-called *recognitiegelden*) to officials in return for the non-enforcement of anti-Catholic legislation; in this manner exorbitant sums of money ended up in the pockets of corrupt sheriffs and bailiffs.⁸⁸ The Delft historian Dirck van Bleyswijck described the characteristic *ad hoc* practices related to suppressing Roman Catholic worship in his city:

Den Rooms-gesinden, voormaels de eerste / en nu de laeste / als by de oude gereprobeerde Pauselijcke instellingen blyvende en geen Reformatie willende deelachtigh syn / en oversulcks de minste vryheydt genietende / werden hare Vergaderingen alleenlijck by forme van conniventie ofte ooghluynkinge toegestaen / midts haer stil en gerust houdende / ende hen allenthalve als gehoorsame Onderdanen de Politie onderwerpende.⁸⁹

The gatherings of the Catholics, who were once first but now are last – since they abide by the old reprobate Papal institutions and want to have no part in the Reformation, and therefore enjoy the least freedom – are permitted only by 'turning a blind eye', on condition that they remain silent and keep the peace, behaving like obedient citizens in conformity with the laws of the state.

Besides being subjected to harassment, Catholics on the whole were negatively affected by a policy of gradual discrete Protestantization which

⁸⁷ Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, pp. 324-328.

⁸⁸ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. i, esp. pp. 462-473.

⁸⁹ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 463.

extended over the space of several generations. This policy was managed by a mixture of coercion and conformism. After 1572 poor relief in Dutch cities was in the hands of secular bodies (in Delft this were traditionally the 'Masters of the Holy Spirit', *Heilige Geestmeesters*) which managed the bulk of confiscated Catholic property and answered to the civic authorities.⁹⁰ At the same time there appeared a strictly regimented confessional system of almsgiving organized by the church board (*kerkeraad*) of the Reformed church.⁹¹ The latter system is sometimes credited (after L. Rogier) with bringing about the quick Protestantization of the poorest section of the population who had little choice but to conform (at least outwardly) to the Reformed church in order to obtain relief, although recently historians (especially C. Parker) have questioned some of Rogier's theses.⁹² To provide for Catholic poor, a system of almsgiving was slowly built up, independently of existing civic and confessional institutions, by the Catholic clergy and lay elites.⁹³

The opportunities for religious freedom were much larger among the middle class, the professional artisanate and the patriciate, as well as the civic officials and regents. Here, paradoxically, Protestantization was best served by the creation of a large social space where individuals could enjoy relative freedom provided they kept their opinions to themselves or conformed outwardly to behaviors associated with non-denominational Protestantism. Sometimes a pretext was enough to get rid of a Catholic magistrate. This was the case with Huygh Janszoon, a Catholic burgo-master in Delft who was called to stage an ambush against the Spanish during the campaign in Holland around 1573-1574. When Janszoon refused to wage war by means that he believed to be dishonorable, he was promptly discharged and placed under house arrest.⁹⁴ Although most Catholic magistrates were not immediately deposed, those who did not turn to Protestantism risked losing their office (and source of income) sooner or later.⁹⁵ In this manner, according to the Delft historian Dirck van Bleyswijck, Calvinists and non-Calvinist Protestants took over

⁹⁰ See e.g. Brouwer, 'Stedebouwkundige veranderingen als gevolg van de opheffing van de kloosters in 1572', p. 37.

⁹¹ Wijbenga, 'Zorg voor armen en wezen', p. 131.

⁹² Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, p. 479. For the local situation in Delft see e.g. Wijbenga, *Delft*, vol. ii, pp. 75-89. For a critique of Rogier's theses, see Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, pp. 229-230.

⁹³ Parker, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-232.

⁹⁴ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 447.

⁹⁵ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, p. 479.

civic institutions in Delft and purged them of Catholics over a number of years:

De Rooms-gesinden dan [...] uyt de Kercken verdreven zijnde / begonnen de Gereformeerden aenstonts over al daer op toe te leggen / om hare partyen alle voordelen af te sien en haer selven absolutelijck meester van 't spel te maecken: men wilde vortaen geen Luiden van de Roomsche gesintheyd tot eenige eminente Charges toegelaten of gevordert hebben; niet uyt kracht van eenige Wette / doch uyt voorsichtigheydt en misvertrouwen; echter de oude Magistraets persoonen (al waren sy van die Gesinte) wierden meerendeels noch in Staet gehouden: maer eenige quitteerden haer Ampt / en met eenen oock het Landt; eenige wierden metter tijdt door 't accessseren van d'ander party / in de Jaerlijcksche Verkiesingen voorby gegaen / en sommige gecontinueert tot haer levens eynde.⁹⁶

After the Catholics [...] had been expelled from the churches, the Reformed [Calvinists] strove eagerly to deprive [the Catholics] of all benefits and to make themselves the absolute masters of the game; since then no Catholics were accepted or promoted to high office, not by the force of law but out of caution and suspicion; long-serving magistrates however, who were of this faith [i.e. Catholic], were held in place, but some quit their jobs and left the country immediately; others, on the instigation of the Calvinists, were bypassed in the annual elections, while some continued [to hold their office] for the rest of their life.

After the Synod of Dordrecht in 1619 had changed the political balance to the disadvantage of the Remonstrants and in the favor of the orthodox Calvinists, there remained an even lesser chance that a Catholic who somehow managed to keep his religious convictions secret could continue to hold public office in the Netherlands. Unable to advance socially, Roman Catholics in Holland dominated the middle-class artisanate, among the shopkeepers and smaller merchants.⁹⁷ By the mid-17th century the profession of painter was one of the very few better-paid career opportunities that were still available to Catholics from middle- or upper-class families.⁹⁸

Despite the persecution, which continued from the Revolt, Bentivoglio noted that the Dutch Republic continued to house 'many remnants' ('menigvuldige overblijfselen') of a Roman Catholic population. Catholics were scattered across all the provinces but the largest number were concentrated in Holland. There, in the economically and politically strongest

⁹⁶ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, pp. 458-459.

⁹⁷ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, p. 480ff.

⁹⁸ Montias, *Artists and Artisans in Delft*, pp. 157-160.

province of the Dutch Republic, Bentivoglio estimated Catholics (around 1600) to comprise even the majority of the urban population ('De meeste menigte van de Roomschesinde, in die gewesten, is in *Hollandt*: en schier het grootste deel van het Borgerlijkste volck van die Provincie, houdt aen het oude geloof').⁹⁹ Modern research tends to support this view, revealing a vibrant substratum of urban and rural Catholicism, even though actual figures were lower than the ones provided by Bentivoglio (recent studies of Haarlem, for instance, show that by 1620 only approximately 12,5% of the population were practicing Catholics).¹⁰⁰

Bentivoglio derived his view of Catholic resilience from the fact that the persecution of Catholics in the Dutch Republic was not as violent as elsewhere in Europe (esp. in England or Germany). Bentivoglio justified this in cultural terms: 'the character of those lands did not allow the Provinces to act with such ruthlessness' ('de gedaente van haer gebied, niet toe-gelaten heeft aen de voorsz. Provincien sulcken gestrengheyt in te voeren').¹⁰¹ None of the pragmatic political considerations to which Bentivoglio ascribed the relative safety of Catholics from persecution, however, had anything to do with the practice of tolerance. Firstly, Bentivoglio was convinced that the Dutch could not afford to add a civil war to an already-existing conflict with Spain:

En zijnde altoos soo seer besich geweest tusschen de uytheemsche wapenen, soudensy hebben konnen vresen eenige inlandtsche oproeringe, indien sy met al te groote hardigheydt, haer tegens de Roomsche-gesinden hadden gedragen, de welcke evenwel in groot getal, onder haer verblijven.¹⁰²

Being thus employed with wars abroad they feared an internal uprising if they had acted too forcefully against the Catholics, who live there in vast numbers.

The second reason was more complex, and it was related to the closely-knit social fabric of the Dutch Republic:

Boven dat, haer gebiedt houdende vele van 't gene der Menigte / en schier een yder sich begevende tot de koophandelinge / soo is de gemeynschap altoos groot geweest van de Koopmanschappen, en van de maegschappen tusschen de ketteren, en de Roomsche-gesinden. In voege / dat de verbinte-

⁹⁹ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *Verhael-boecken*, p. 252.

¹⁰⁰ A recent outline on the position of Catholics in the major cities of Holland (Haarlem, Dordrecht, Leiden and Amsterdam) but not in Delft, is provided by Kooi, 'Popish Impudence', pp. 75-85.

¹⁰¹ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *Verhael-boecken*, p. 251.

¹⁰² Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *op. cit.*, p. 251.

nisse van 't bloedt / vele vereenigt heeft in liefde / en de gelegentheyt van de koopmanschap / vele anderen in de voordeelen: ende door dese wegen, heeft de Roomsche Catholijcksche Godtsdienst / gevonden eenige verdragelijke oogluycinge in de verborgen oeffeninge [...]¹⁰³

What is more, since that area is densely populated and nearly everyone is occupied with trade, so there have been many close commercial and family relations between the heretics and the Catholics. While many have been joined in love through blood relations, and others by sharing a profit through commerce, so in this manner the covert practice of the Roman Catholic religion could be tolerated to some degree by 'turning a blind eye' [...]

Whenever the Catholics and Protestants living in the Dutch Republic were united by family ties and commercial interests, these relations blurred to some degree the dividing lines between the Catholic world and that of the Reformation. Literature and art in Delft preserved this sense of a closely-knit society in which Catholics and Calvinists lived alongside each other. The Delft priest Johannes Stalpart van der Wiele's *Roomse Reijs* ('s-Hertogenbosch: Johannes Scheffer, 1624) was a lively dialogue between a Catholic and a strict Calvinist. Such literature could only mean anything to readers in a society where conversations with representatives of other religions occurred on a daily basis. The historian Dirck van Bleyswijck, although in no way a friend of the Roman Catholic Church, as he indicated in his writings, nevertheless faithfully recorded the biographies of famous Catholics from Delft and cited profusely from Roman Catholic religious literature in his local historical chronicle, *Beschryvinge der stadt Delft* (1667). A Protestant who married into a Catholic family in Delft and probably eventually converted to Catholicism was the painter Johannes Vermeer.¹⁰⁴ The image that Bentivoglio painted of the Netherlands was therefore quite accurate, and certainly valid for Delft, when it portrayed a society in which Catholics and non-Catholics, notwithstanding some very real differences and a legacy of public conflict, were nevertheless united by private and family concerns, and by economic ventures.¹⁰⁵

Although Bentivoglio saw a glimmer of hope for the survival of Catholicism in the Dutch Republic in the informal *rapprochement* established between Catholics and Protestants, he and other writers also high-

¹⁰³ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *op. cit.*, pp. 251-252.

¹⁰⁴ Abels, 'Kerk en religie in het leven van Johannes Vermeer', pp. 68-77.

¹⁰⁵ For the impact of mixed marriages on the gradual process of protestantization see Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. i, pp. 481-482.

lighted what they saw as the negative aspects of the pluralistic religious landscape of the Netherlands. The wide variety of religious opinion stood in the way of political unity:

Behalven dit onderscheyt van insichten, hoe seer ist dat noch strijt, de verscheydenheyt van soo veel en besondere gesindten, met de eenigheyt van de gemoederen? zijnde veel, en verschillende op menigderley wijze, onder haer de gesintheden van de ketterije, in de welcke het volck van de Vereenigde Provinciën haer verdeylt; daer beneffens, dat in de selfde landen, het getal van de Roomsgesinde seer groot is.¹⁰⁶

Apart from this difference [on political matters], what of the conflict of so many different [religious] beliefs with a sense of unity? There are [in the northern Netherlands] many kinds of heresy, with regard to which the people of the United Provinces are divided among themselves; apart from this, in the very same country there is a large group of Catholics.

Writing at the height of the Arminian-Gomarist conflict almost a decade later, the Anglo-Flemish Catholic polemicist Richard Verstegen similarly spoke of the instability brought about by the mingling of different religions:

[...] meer verscheyden taelen niet gevonden waeren in de confusie van *Babel* dan daer nu verscheyden ghelooouen geuonden syn in de confusie van *Batavia*. Die van *Hollandt* ende de by gheuoeghde landen noemen hunne seluen de geunieerde Prouincien, maer noit en leefden menschen in dese werelt in meer ongeunieerde eenicheyt alsulcken grooten verwerringe ende discoordt heeft de vryheyt onder hunne gebrocht...¹⁰⁷

[...] more different languages could not be found amid the confusion of Babel than there are now different religions in the confusion of Batavia. The people of Holland and the surrounding lands call themselves the United Provinces, but there has never been a nation in this world joined together in more disunity, such is the vast confusion and discord that freedom has caused among them...

Yet despite the official anti-Catholic policy of the Protestant regime of the Dutch Republic Bentivoglio persisted in the belief that the tide would turn eventually in the favor of the Church:

De ketterije heerst dan in de Vereenigde Provinciën [...] ende de Roomsch-Catholijckschen Godts-dienst, sucht binnen de selve in tegendeel onder een swaer jock. Maer dese suchten, ende jammerlijcke onderdruckingen van

¹⁰⁶ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *Verhael-boecken...*, p. 160.

¹⁰⁷ [Verstegen], *De Spiegel der Nederlandsche ellenden*, p. 18.

de Rooms gesinden, sullen noch eens voortaan komen op te houden door Godes genade. Om dat men eyndelijck in alle eeuwen, als dan de ware Kerk haer hoofd meest heeft sien ophouden, wanneer de vyanden het meeste getracht hebben van haer te verdrucken: en in tegendeel heeft men gesien, dat alle monster van ketterije te neder gestort is in sijn eygen vergift, naer dat het voleynt hadde het selve uyt te braken.¹⁰⁸

Heresy, therefore, reigns in the United Provinces [...] whereas the Roman Catholic religion languishes there under a heavy yoke. But this sighing and this miserable repression of the Catholics will cease one day through God's grace. Because ultimately, throughout the centuries, the true Church held her head high whenever Her enemies tried to bring Her down, whereas the monster of heresy collapsed in its own poison after it had the impudence to spew it out.

Expressing the conviction that the history of the Catholic Church was guided by the hand of God, Bentivoglio placed the private histories and tribulations of the Dutch Catholics at the hands of the Calvinist authorities (from a Catholic perspective) within the wider Christian history of salvation. Most importantly, this history contained an intimation of the ultimate victory of Christ and a promise of the impending collapse of the systems of belief crafted by the adversaries of the Church. As we will see below, Bentivoglio's words about the Church, perfected as she was through adversity, triumphant in a material rather than spiritual way, were a motto that the Catholic writers in the Dutch Republic, who struggled to maintain and rebuild Catholic identity after 1572, could have taken as their own.

5.3. A SIGN OF CATHOLIC REVIVAL: THE ACTIVITY OF SASBOUT VOSMEER IN DELFT

The dire state of affairs in the northern provinces of the Netherlands after 1572 did not extinguish Catholic spiritual life, nor did it lead to a dismantling of Catholic literary networks despite ongoing efforts to bring about the Protestantization of society. The Catholic Church, although consigned for the most part of the Dutch 'Golden Age' (the period between 1572 and 1672) to an underground existence, remained

¹⁰⁸ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.), *Verhael-boecken*, pp. 257-258.

nevertheless the Church of groups of faithful cared for by priests who belonged to still-intact diocesan hierarchies, the *Missio Hollandica* (in the archdiocese of Utrecht after 1583, officially since 1600) and recently-established Jesuit stations (in Holland after 1591).¹⁰⁹ Insofar as these secular and regular priests were dynamic, charismatic figures, who sought to re-invigorate the spiritual life of the Catholic faithful, their efforts at rebuilding Catholic worship and Catholic identity succeeded, as they did at Delft. This success was due to a variety of means, not least of which was literature. In the period between 1580 and 1630 Delft was the terrain of the activities of several such energetic priests, the most important among whom were the Apostolic Vicar Sasbout Vosmeer, the Jesuit missionary Ludovicus Makeblijde and the secular priest Johannes Stalpart van der Wiele. That the areas around Delft are mainly Catholic on the present-day map of religious confessions is largely a result of their strenuous pastoral activities.¹¹⁰

A *Delvenaar* by birth, Sasbout Vosmeer (Sasboldus Vosmerus; 1548-1614) was a persevering and charismatic priest whose name has come to be associated with the transitional period in the history of the Catholic Church in the northern Netherlands following the Dutch Revolt. He was the scion of a regent family whose members held high positions in Delft. Sasbout's father, Michael (Michiël) Vosmeer, was the town's treasurer, while his mother, Catharina Sasbout, was the daughter of one of the burgomasters of Delft, Jan Sasbout Dirkszoon.¹¹¹ One of Sasbout's brothers, Michael Vosmeer, was a dedicated Renaissance humanist, the author of a richly-illustrated Latin history of the counts of Holland and

¹⁰⁹ Although the Catholic pastoral presence on the level of individual parishes in the Northern Netherlands generally bears the mark of discontinuity (Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. i, p. 444), the diocesan hierarchy persisted in an uninterrupted state in the province of Holland during the transitional period after 1572 (*ibid.*, vol. ii, pp. 8-37), transitioning into the *missio Hollandica* from 1583 onwards. For the *missio Hollandica*, see Hamans, *Geschiedenis van de katholieke kerk in Nederland*, pp. 248-278; Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, pp. 5-164, still remains the essential source on the first phase of the mission. For the dating of the *missio Hollandica* see *ibid.*, pp. 5-11; for the activity of the Jesuits, pp. 46-66. For a general outline encompassing the 'Catholic revival' of the period from 1572 till the mid-17th century see Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 377-389.

¹¹⁰ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, p. 157.

¹¹¹ For biographies of Sasbout Vosmeer see esp. Janssen, 'Sasbout Vosmeer' in: *NNBW*, vol. iv, pp. 1420-1426; Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, pp. 10-46 and following. The most significant early-modern printed source is [Van Heussen], *Batavia sacra* [Dutch transl.], vol. iii, pp. 155-236 (no modern critical edition is available).

Zeeland (1578),¹¹² as well as of a posthumously-published book about Marian miracles in Delft, *Diva virgo et crux salutaris Delfica* (Cologne: Bernardus Gualterus 1629). Michael Vosmeer also translated a volume of homilies by his uncle, Adam Sasbout, a Franciscan from Louvain (*see above, Chapter 2.3*).¹¹³

Hugo Franciscus van Heussen, an eighteenth-century historian of the Church in the Netherlands, made note of Sasbout Vosmeer's early calling to the priesthood:

Sasbout noch een kind zijnde loopt niet ravotten over straat / gelijk de andere kinderen / of buitens huis speelen; maar houd zich doorgaans binnens huis / en verwerpt het speel-goed dat hem zijne Ouders toesteeken / maar regt Outaaren op van ruwe planken; schikt dezelve op / en verbeeldt met zijne noch stamelende tonge de Altaar-geheimenissen / dewelke hy naderhand / Priester geworden zijnde / staat te berigten.¹¹⁴

When Sasbout was a small child he did not run about rowdily in the streets like other children, nor did he play outside in the street, but he remained indoors, and disdaining the toys that his parents gave him, he set up and embellished altars of raw planks, and then in still faltering words he called up the mysteries of the altar which afterwards he would celebrate as a priest.

Vosmeer's family of undoubtedly pious Catholics nurtured his calling and provided him with a solid education. Vosmeer first attended a Latin school nearby Delft, possibly at Naaldwijk. As a sixteen-year-old he continued on to Louvain where he graduated as a master in philosophy.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, on 22 March 1572, a year that (as Hugo Franciscus van Heussen remarked) was undoubtedly 'not propitious for the Catholic religion',¹¹⁶ Sasbout Vosmeer was ordained as a priest by Utrecht archbishop Frederik Schenk van Toutenburg. Soon after his ordination Vosmeer returned to Louvain to pursue his studies, obtaining a licentiate degree in theology, meeting the theologian and future cardinal St. Rob-

¹¹² Vosmeer, *Principes Hollandiae et Zelandiae domini Frisiae*, Antwerp: Christopher Plantin; with etchings by Philips Galle, 1578.

¹¹³ Sasbout, Vosmeer (ed.), *Ex ordine minorum s. theol. professoris celeberr. Homiliae accuratè recognitiae. Acessere rever. p. vita. et responsio adversus aemulum. item argumenta homiliarum. Tria haec nunc primum edita curante Michaelae Vosmero*. Cologne: Bernardus Gualterus, 1613. Cf. Boitet, *Beschryving der stad Delft...*, p. 668.

¹¹⁴ [Van Heussen], *Batavia Sacra* [Dutch transl.], vol. iii, p. 157.

¹¹⁵ [Van Heussen], *op. cit.*, vol. iii, p. 158.

¹¹⁶ [Van Heussen], *op. cit.*, vol. iii, p. 160.

erto Bellarmino, with whom he would continue to correspond in later years.¹¹⁷

In 1579 Vosmeer was forced to abandon his studies owing to the approaching offensive of William of Orange in Flanders and Brabant, which threatened to engulf Louvain. He travelled to Cologne, where many displaced Catholics from the Low Countries were staying, including the successor of the archbishop of Utrecht, vicar of the chapter of Utrecht, Johannes van Bruhesen. It is likely that in those years Sasbout Vosmeer paid a clandestine visit to Holland, and possibly to Delft. More importantly, however, Vosmeer travelled to Rome, where he sought the advice of the Pontiff, Clement VIII, and the Roman Curia, about the situation in the Netherlands. It was possibly as a result of this visit, on 21 May 1583, that Vosmeer accepted from Johannes van Bruhesen the dignity of Vicar-General of the archbishopric of Utrecht.¹¹⁸

Ever since the Dutch Revolt gained a permanent foothold in the north it became clear that structural adjustments had to be carried out were the Church to be able to fulfill its pastoral mission in the Netherlands under those vastly different and considerably more difficult circumstances. The turnover of 1572 had dealt an incomparable blow to existing diocesan structures established after the reforms of 1559. Although the material infrastructure of these institutions had been confiscated by the Calvinists, the ecclesiastic hierarchy itself remained intact. However, it was weakened and displaced; it was powerless to carry out the pastoral mission of the Church in the territories held by the protestant Dutch rebels. Frederik Schenk van Toutenburg, archbishop of Utrecht, who had protested the violation of the religious toleration accord of 1576,¹¹⁹ died on 25 August 1580, but not before he had nominated his dean, Johannes van Bruhezen, a potential successor, to the position of *vicarius capitularis* of Utrecht. When Van Bruhezen appointed Sasbout Vosmeer as Vicar-General, he was taking a necessarily interim measure before a new archbishop could be appointed. This, according to the concordat of 1559, was the prerogative of the sovereign of the Netherlands, Philip II and his successors (in other words, in the terms of the concordat the Pope had only to confirm the monarch's decision by consecrating the bishop). The Spanish authorities, however, hesitated with a new appointment because

¹¹⁷ [Van Heussen], *op. cit.*, vol. iii, p. 159.

¹¹⁸ Janssen, 'Sasbout Vosmeer' in: *NNBW*, vol. iv, p. 1420; Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, p. 11.

¹¹⁹ [Van Heussen], *Batavia sacra* [Dutch transl.], vol. iii, p. 29.

they were still hopeful that a political-military solution would settle the situation in the northern provinces.¹²⁰

The Holy See's reaction to this new situation was to create an autonomous missionary structure in order to circumnavigate the obstacles that the existing church organization, which had to defer to the Spanish sovereign, had proven unable to surmount. The notion that the Catholic reconstruction in the northern Netherlands had to be placed in the hands of an ecclesiastic plenipotentiary who would be free to act despite the limitations imposed on the post-1559 hierarchy began to gestate in the minds of Pope Gregory XIII and of diplomats of the Holy See after the Act of Abjuration (1581), leading to the establishing of a nunciature at Cologne in 1584.¹²¹ This initiative had probably come through the efforts of Wilhelmus Lindanus, who briefed Gregory XIII on the situation in the Netherlands, or possibly through cardinal St. Roberto Bellarmino, who had also been consulted by the Holy See.¹²² Seeing that the political situation prevented the appointment of new bishops to fill the vacant seats, the papal nuncio at Cologne, cardinal Ottavio Mirto Frangipani, received from Pope Clement VIII the authority to delegate some of his prerogatives to a number of selected priests. Sasbout Vosmeer, appointed Vicar-Apostolic on 3 June 1592, was granted the rights delegated by the Holy See, and thereby placed in charge of supervising the secular clergy in the archdiocese of Utrecht.¹²³

As Vicar-General of the diocese of Utrecht, with powers delegated by the Holy See, Sasbout resided in his birthplace, Delft, utilizing an extensive network of contacts to travel around the region of Delfland under the alias 'Bonifacius' (after St. Boniface, the 'Apostle of the Frisians' who died a martyr's death near Dokkum in 754). On the Octave Day of Easter, 1583, Sasbout Vosmeer arrived in Delft in defiance of anti-Catholic regulations, ostensibly to settle family matters,¹²⁴ but in reality to consolidate and re-organize the life of the Church in the Dutch Republic after the Revolt. He took up residence in the family home next to the 'Black Unicorn' (*Zwarte Eenhoorn*), a brewery in the hands of the Vosmeers, close to the *Oude Kerk*.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, pp. 5-11.

¹²¹ Rogier, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 8-9.

¹²² Rogier, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 9-10.

¹²³ Rogier, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, p. 15.

¹²⁴ Fruin, *Verspreide geschriften*, vol. vii, pp. 263-265.

¹²⁵ Deelder, *Bijdragen*, p. 5.

The political situation in Delft was very tense. Only weeks before Sasbout Vosmeer's arrival in Delft, on 17 February 1583, the town was sealed off owing to the discovery of a planned *coup d'état* allegedly masterminded by Cornelis de Hooghe, an engraver and Habsburg loyalist, and several accomplices acting on orders from Philip II.¹²⁶ On 24 November 1583 William of Orange returned to Delft from Antwerp.¹²⁷ His plans for a religious compromise, which was intended to provide a wider political basis for the Revolt, had collapsed. With regard to foreign relations Orange had suffered a severe setback in his pro-French foreign policy after he failed to secure the lasting support of François, duke of Anjou, who had been elected sovereign of the Netherlands on Orange's insistence in 1581. On the domestic front William of Orange was caught in the middle between the hardline Calvinists, who considered him unreliable, and the moderate regents who were increasingly critical of plans that would have allowed him to become the sovereign of Holland and Zeeland.¹²⁸ At the same time it is something of an irony that William of Orange, the leader of the Revolt, and Sasbout Vosmeer were almost neighbors during this time. The former cloister of St. Agatha where the prince had taken his quarters was only a few footsteps away from the 'Black Unicorn', the domicile of the Vicar-Apostolic of the Netherlands.¹²⁹ The irony was compounded by the fact that both men had been declared enemies of the state. Orange had a price put on his head by Philip II in 1580, while Vosmeer was liable to be prosecuted under the terms of the States of Holland anti-Catholic resolution of 1581 (he would eventually be tried for *lèse majesté* in 1602).

The eventful life of William 'the Silent' came to an end when he was assassinated by Balthasar Gérard (Gerards) on the staircase of the cloister of St. Agatha on 10 July 1584. The assassination produced much literature both for and against William of Orange.¹³⁰ On the pro-Orangist side one has to mention a play by Caspar Ens, the conrector of the

¹²⁶ Bor, *Oorsprongk, begin en vervolgh*, vol. ii, p. 363-364. Smit, 'De aanslag van Cornelis de Hooghe op de veiligheid van den staat 1583', pp. 73-108.

¹²⁷ Wijbenga, *Delft*, vol. ii, p. 46. For the celebrations organized by the Delft rhetoricians to welcome William of Orange, see Waterschoot, 'Oranjepropaganda te Delft in 1581', pp. 133-140.

¹²⁸ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 211-216.

¹²⁹ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, p. 33.

¹³⁰ Out of the many pamphlets dedicated to relating this event one has to mention a booklet that appeared in the same year: *Verhael vande moort / ghedaen aenden persone des doorluchtighen hoochgeboorn fursten ende heeren / heern Wilhelmus byder gratien Godts / Prince van Orangien...* Delft: Aelbrecht Hendricxz, 1584.

Latin school at Delft, *Princeps Auriacus, sive Libertas defensa: tragoedia nova* (Delft: Bruyn Harmansz Schinkel, 1598). This tragedy might have served as the model for a similarly-themed play by Daniel Heinsius, *Auriacus, sive libertas saucia* (Leiden: Andries Clouck, 1602). Heinsius' play was translated into Dutch and adapted to the conventions of *rederijker* theater by Jacob Duym as *Het moordadich stuck van Balthasar Gerards, begaen aen den doorluchtighen prince van Oraignen* (Leiden: Hendrick Lodewijcxsoon Haestens, 1606). An admittedly much later play on the same subject, and also an adaptation of Heinsius' *Auriacus*, was written by the Delft rhetorician Gijsbrecht van Hogendorp, *Truer-spel van de Moordt begaen aen Wilhe[l]m by der Gratie Gods / Prince van Oraengien* (Amsterdam: Paulus Aertsz van Ravesteyn for Cornelis Lodewijcksz van der Plasse, 1617). This drama was sponsored by the Delft authorities and staged in the city in 1616.¹³¹

The most startling (certainly to a modern sensibility) literary text related to the assassination of William of Orange, a pamphlet penned immediately after the event, was not so much a reaction to the death of the prince as a eulogy of Gérard. It accused William of oath-breaking, violating churches, and spreading heresy, all of which, the author asserted, were capital crimes. Gérard, by contrast, was represented as a belated instrument of justice and his execution was described in terms reserved for Catholic martyrs.¹³² Beginning with Robert Fruin historians have pointed to Sasbout Vosmeer as the author of this widely re-printed pamphlet.¹³³ Vosmeer's implied authorship of a eulogy of Gérard must be seen in the wider socio-historical and cultural context of the persecution of Catholics in the Netherlands after 1572. Vosmeer had been appalled by the brutal public torture of Gérard. Considering himself to be a potential candidate for martyrdom, the vicar-apostolic studied the lives of Catholics who had laid down their lives for the faith, beginning with St. Boniface and ending with one of the non-canonized victims of the Revolt, Cornelis Musius. He would later champion the latter's cause as a martyr, alongside that of Gérard, before the institutions of the

¹³¹ For pro-Orangist plays see Vermaseren, 'Humanistische drama's over de moord op de vader des vaderlands', pp. 31-67; the Delft context is explored by Van Boheemen, Van der Heijden, *De Delftse rederijkers*, pp. 130-137.

¹³² [anon.] *Principis Auriaci Wilhelmi Nassoici caedis et fortissimi adolescentis Baldassaris Brugundi cruciatus, quo ob eandem Delphis Hollandiae affectus fuit, vera narratio*. For a summary of the pamphlet in the French translation published at Douai see Bor, *Oorsprongk, begin en vervolg*, vol. ii, p. 433.

¹³³ Fruin, 'Het Latijnsche origineel van Les cruels et horribles Tormens de Balthazar Gerard', pp. 135-145 and idem, *Verspreide geschriften*, vol. iii, pp. 112-117.

Church. In his anti-Calvinist outlook Vosmeer believed that Gérard had laid down his life to rid the Netherlands of a tyrannical enemy. This is the reason why in 1575 Vosmeer composed a Latin office for Gérard. He also preserved the head of Gérard (which had been stolen by a Habsburg loyalist) to be venerated as a future relic, and occasionally tried to convince Pope Clement VIII to have Gérard canonized.¹³⁴ It is likely that Vosmeer's highly negative opinion of William of Orange, whose policies he found responsible for the destruction of the Church in the northern Netherlands, contributed to his taking up the cause of Gérard as a martyr. This sentiment was echoed by other Catholics throughout Europe, even though the event of the assassination itself, as well as the solemn state funeral that followed, did much to build the legacy (and historical myth) of William of Orange as the beloved 'father of the fatherland' (*pater patriae* or *vader des vaderlands*) whose tragic death was universally mourned. To quote a contemporary account by Petrus Bor, the late-16th century historian of Holland, 'the entire land was in great mourning because of his death, and most especially Delft, on the day of his burial, where a great many tears were shed for reason of the tremendous love and affection that everyone felt for him' ('Daer was in 't gehele Land grote droefheid om zijn dood en bysonder binnen Delf / op desen dag synder begraeffenisse / daer grote menigte van tranen uitgestort syn geweest / door de overgrote liefde en affectie die hem ook elk een toe droeg').¹³⁵

Since the early 1580s, as a result of the successful military advance of Alexander Farnese, prince of Parma, the Netherlands became permanently divided into a northern Protestant half and a southern Catholic one, a division that corresponded more or less to the line of the great rivers, the Rhine, Scheldt and Maas. After the southern provinces had been reclaimed for the Church and the crown of Spain, the three Holland towns of Delft, Haarlem (the seat of the post-1559 bishopric) and Leiden, became the main centers of a modest but sustained Catholic revival which culminated in the years 1585-1605.¹³⁶ A source of worry for Vosmeer, however, was the insecurity which resulted from the vacancy of the archbishop's seat at Utrecht after the death of the nominate Johannes van Bruhezen in 1600. The Habsburg ruler of the southern Netherlands,

¹³⁴ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, pp. 35-37.

¹³⁵ Bor, *Oorsprongk, begin en vervolg*, vol. ii, p. 435. For Sasbout Vosmeer's activities at the time of the death of William of Orange see Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, pp. 33-37.

¹³⁶ Rogier, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, pp. 13 and 26.

archduke Albert of Austria, was cautious about appointing a new archbishop for political reasons. An appointment at this stage would have complicated the fraught relations with the Dutch, with whom the southern Netherlands were already hoping to achieve peace (the Twelve Years' Truce between the Dutch Republic and Spain would be signed in 1609). Pope Clement VIII therefore elevated Vosmeer to the dignity of titular archbishop of Philippi *in partibus infidelium*, with the understanding that he would be consecrated bishop of Utrecht with the consent of the archduke after the proper political conditions had been fulfilled. Despite Vosmeer's efforts, however, this nomination never materialized.¹³⁷

In September 1601 Sasbout Vosmeer travelled to Brussels to meet with the nuncio, whose office (for the Netherlands) had been moved there in 1596. This and a meeting with archduke Albert of Austria in Ostend, likewise on church affairs, came to the attention of the authorities of the Dutch Republic. The States of Holland accused Sasbout in 1602 of consorting with the enemy: the verdict was high treason.¹³⁸ Vosmeer was banished from Holland and his family possessions in Delft were confiscated. He moved to Cologne, where he founded a seminary for the priesthood, the *Collegium Atticollense*. Until his death in 1614 Vosmeer remained as apostolic vicar in Cologne but all through these years he regularly continued to pay secret visits to Holland.

Bentivoglio, the well-informed papal nuncio to the Low Countries from 1607 to 1615, gave this view of the new ecclesiastical hierarchy as it crystallized in the years when Sasbout Vosmeer was responsible for the reconstruction of the Church in the province of Holland:

Alle de Priesters staen onder het gebiet van eenen Apostolijkschen Vicaris, die dese voorgaende jaren inghevoert wiert, met onderpliching aen den Apostolijksche Gesant van Nederlant; en aen hem wiert oock gegeven de benaminghe van Philippischen Aerts-Bisschop, om grooter ontsach, ende om dat hy soude mogen doen den dienste van een gewoonelijcke in die Provincien. Daeromme doet hy by wijlen eenige reysen, oeffenende sijn ampt in dier voege, als hem toegestaen is.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ The seat of archbishop of Utrecht remained vacant through the 17th century. That situation rankled some Dutch clergy, especially those connected to the still-existing chapter of Utrecht. An illicit attempt on the part of a group of Dutch priests to nominate Cornelis Steenoven as archbishop without consent of the Roman Pontiff Innocent XIII proved to be the proverbial 'drop of water' that led to the schism in the Dutch Catholic Church becoming a fact in 1723. Hamans, *Geschiedenis van de katholieke kerk in Nederland*, pp. 298-300.

¹³⁸ [Van Heussen], *Batavia sacra* [Dutch transl.], vol. iii, p. 183.

¹³⁹ Bentivoglio, De Carpentier (transl.) *Verhael-boecken*, p. 256.

All priests are responsible to an Apostolic Vicar, an office introduced some years ago, subordinated to the Apostolic Envoy to the Netherlands; to [the Apostolic Vicar] was also given the title of Archbishop of Philippi, for greater authority and for the purpose of replacing an ordinary [bishop] in those provinces. This is why he embarks on frequent travels, exercising his office in such ways as are permitted.

Sasbout Vosmeer invested much of his energy in travelling throughout the Netherlands, sharing in the hardships that ordinary Catholics in Holland encountered in their everyday lives.¹⁴⁰ He can be justly credited with handling most of the work that went into successfully adapting the hierarchy of the Catholic Church to the new conditions that prevailed in the northern provinces after 1572.

¹⁴⁰ See e.g. Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, p. 321.

6. CASE STUDY: A LITERARY NETWORK IN DELFT AROUND 1589. SASBOUT VOSMEER'S BIOGRAPHY OF THE VENERABLE GEERTRUYD VAN OOSTEN

In 1589 the political prospects for Catholics in the northern Netherlands were becoming increasingly bleaker. The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 and the rise to the French throne of the Protestant king Henry IV, a recent ally of the Dutch *geuzen*, indicated that there would be no quick resolution to the armed conflict raging along the confessional boundary between the northern and southern Netherlands. Despite the assassination of William of Orange at Delft in 1584 the union of the rebellious Dutch provinces had proven able to stand up to the test of continuing military and political pressure. In late August of 1589 prince Maurice of Nassau became stadholder of Utrecht, Gelderland and Overijssel, thus further centralizing the rebels' military command over the northern Netherlands. A glimmer of hope for Habsburg loyalists came with the fall of the rebel metropolis of Antwerp after a lengthy siege in 1585. This event provided fresh evidence that the Spanish forces under Alexander Farnese, prince of Parma, were slowly but surely regaining the ground that had been lost to the *geuzen* in the southern provinces during the 1570s. Yet even so, in the autumn of 1588 Parma failed to take the town of Bergen-op-Zoom, while in August of the following year his army was plagued by mutinies. In this period the Spanish war machine was re-gearing for a renewed conflict with the Huguenots of France. This change of priorities on the part of the Habsburgs would open the way to prince Maurice of Nassau's grand offensive which lasted from 1590 till around 1600 (much later, in the 19th century, the historian Robert Fruin would call that period the decisive decade of the Eighty Years War).¹

¹ The decade 1588-1598 is described by Fruin, *Tien jaren uit den Tachtigjarigen Oorlog*. For the events in the first phase of this period see esp. pp. 9-26. A recently-published standard work on this period of the Dutch Revolt is Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 233-240; for a general survey of the political context see also Van Deursen, 'The Dutch Republic', pp. 144-148.

6.1. WAS SASBOUT VOSMEER THE AUTHOR OF A LIFE OF GEERTRUYD VAN OOSTEN?

Amidst these turbulent events there appeared in Louvain a slim booklet of sixteen pages in octavo containing an account of the life of the venerable Geertruyd (also spelled Geertrui, Geertruid) van Oosten (c. 1320-1358), an uncanonized beguine mystic and stigmatic.² This booklet, bearing the Dutch title *Het leuen van die Heylighe ende waerdighe maecht Geertruyd van Oosten...* ('The life of the holy and worthy maiden Geertruyd van Oosten'), came off the press at the Louvain workshop of Franciscus Fabri in 1589.³ Although no author's name is given on the title leaf of this biography, a highly plausible hypothesis, offered by A.M.J van Buuren, is that the author of the Louvain booklet was none other than the Apostolic Vicar of Holland, Sasbout Vosmeer.⁴

Evidence for Vosmeer's authorship of some kind of biography of the venerable Geertruyd (though not necessarily this particular *vita*) comes from his letters to a close circle which included his brother Tilman, a priest and ecclesiastic censor at Cologne who acted as his assistant and secretary.⁵ These letters confirm that roughly in the mid-1580s (corresponding with his period of residence in Delft), Sasbout Vosmeer undertook to compile a collection of the lives of Dutch saints.⁶ Although this compilation was never finalized, signs of his in-

² Because Geertruyd van Oosten had died in a reputation of holiness, she was venerated locally as a saint in Delft during the later Middle Ages and in the beginning of the early modern period. The *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1912) refers to a local *cultus* of the venerable Geertruyd in Delft (Casanova, 'Gertrude van der [sic] Oosten', *CE*, vol. vi, p. 535). For the reasons why Geertrui van Oosten had not been canonized during the later Middle Ages see Bredero, 'De Delftse begijn Gertrui van Oosten', pp. 83-97. The venerable Geertrui van Oosten (sometimes referred to as a saint) was commemorated in a series of hagiographic lexicons published during the early-modern period, especially the Bollandists' *Acta Sanctorum* (for the early-modern hagiographic sources containing a life of the venerable Geertruyd see below, **Chapter 6.2.**). Recent bibliographies are provided by Carasso-Kok, *Repertorium*, pp. 35-36 and Beukers, 'Oosten, Geertrui van' in: *DVN*.

³ *Het Leuen van die Heylighe ende waerdighe maecht Geertruyd van Oosten / Baghijnken tot Delft*, Leuven: Franciscus Fabri, 1589. The only known surviving copy of this booklet has been preserved at the University Library, Utrecht, THO: RAR 2-83 dl 4. This copy comes from the library of the Franciscan monastery at Weert.

⁴ Van Buuren, 'Geertruyd van Oosten and "Het daghet in den Oosten"', pp. 75-87.

⁵ Van Buuren, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-86.

⁶ L.J. Rogier argued that the veneration of saints (and hagiographic literature) before the Dutch Revolt mirrored the general pattern in medieval Europe but displayed

terest in the figure of the venerable Geertruyd van Oosten nevertheless show up frequently in other letters. In one of these, written on 8 August 1585 (i.e. four years before the Louvain edition had been published) and addressed to Tilman, Sasbout Vosmeer expressed a wish to receive from his brother a vernacular translation of the biography of the Delft mystic, ‘vita Geertrudis de oesten in patriam linguam translata’ along with the Hours of the Virgin Mary for the express purpose of issuing a printed edition of both of these texts (together or separately – the letter is not clear on this point).⁷ A following letter to Tilman from 15 March 1587 made mention of Petrus Fabri (possibly the father of Franciscus Fabri, whose name is attached to the Louvain *vita*) as the printer of a life of Geertruyd van Oosten and of the hours of the Virgin Mary.⁸ The next letter, dated 24 April 1588, mentions an ‘officium de Geertrude de oesten’ together with a litany and a life of the Virgin Mary.⁹ From information about the Vosmeer’s literary and ecclesiastic associates at Cologne and their contacts with the printers Petrus Fabri, who was active in

little or no national properties. Although many editions of the standard hagiographic work in Dutch at this time, the *Passionael*, contained the lives of saints active in the northern Low Countries (i.e. SS. Willibrord and Boniface), the significance that these *vitae* might have for the specific cultural identity of Catholics from the Netherlands was not emphasized by the translators of the *Passionael*. For evidence to the contrary, however, see above, on Nerdenu, *Inter Apollinem et Mercurium dialogus fabulosus*, fol. [9r], where St. Willibrord was explicitly mentioned for his role as a missionary to Holland. The function of the early missionaries in literary discourses only became more prominent after 1572. Owing to the activities of Sasbout Vosmeer and others in the *Missio Hollandica*, increasingly more stress was placed in Catholic circles on prayer through the intercession of such specifically Dutch saints. The figures of early missionaries were intentionally presented together, while their activities were seen as an analogy for the situation of the Church in the early-modern northern Netherlands. Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, pp. 762-765. Recently, however, the pendulum has swung again towards de-emphasizing the ‘national’ characteristics of Dutch Catholicism. In reaction to Rogier’s theses, Charles Parker argued for giving a broader scope to its ‘universal and Roman dimensions’, *Faith on the Margins*, pp. 55-56.

⁷ ‘Optarem imprimi posse festa marie a me transmissa olim, cum vita Geertrudis de oesten in patriam linguam translata, responde si commoditas habeatur’, cited in: Van Buuren, ‘Geertruyd van Oosten’, pp. 84-85.

⁸ ‘Pretera vbi videris quedam de Geertrude nostrate, et maria / impressa sub nomine petri fabri. perpende tecum si eius eundem petrum frabri [sic] oporteat promouere ... Et ... impressor marie historias cum geertrudis parauit sub petri nomine’ cited in: Van Buuren, ‘Geertruyd van Oosten...’, p. 84.

⁹ ‘Iunxi illis quedam ex scriptis, Additiones ... ad Martij, et officium de Geertrude de oesten. Mitto nunc duplices litanias quarum alie ante aliquot menses cum vita marie manuscripta intercepte fuerunt’ cited in: Van Buuren, ‘Geertruyd van Oosten...’, p. 84.

Louvain between 1570 and 1586, and his probable successor Franciscus Fabri, Van Buuren therefore concluded that ‘Sasbout might be the author of the Louvain booklet, even though no concrete evidence has yet been adduced’.¹⁰

6.2. THE SOURCES OF THE LOUVAIN VITA

Below, we will adopt Van Buuren’s hypothesis while briefly outlining the main stages in the accumulation of textual material that went into the Louvain *vita*. We will examine the *vita*’s impact on the theological and historical scholarship related to the study of hagiography as it developed within the literary networks of the Counter-Reformation in the Netherlands. Doing so, we will present the case that even though the Louvain *vita* was not frequently used as a source by other authors, it does take a central place in the family of hagiographic texts dedicated to the venerable Geertruyd van Oosten.

It speaks much of the modesty and sincerity of the author of the Louvain *vita* that he did not lay a claim to sole authorship; instead, the work was announced as a compilation from at least two other sources:

Het // Leuen van die Heylighe // ende waerdighe maecht Geertruyd // van Oosten / Baghijnken tot Delft. // Vergadert wt de Cronijck van Holland / oude geschreuen boecken ende het seuenste History Boeck der heylighen / onlanx uytghegeuen by die eerwaerdighe Schrijuer Laurentivs Surius.

The // Life of the Holy // and worthy maiden Geertruyd // van Oosten, beguine at Delft. // Compiled from the Chronicle of Holland, old manuscripts and from the seventh volume of the history of saints’ lives, recently published by the honorable author Laurentius Surius.

The first source, a chronicle of Holland, can be easily identified as Cornelis Aurelius’ *Die Cronycke van Hollandt, Zeelandt ende Vrieslant* (Leiden: Jan Seversz, 1517), a historical work better known as the *Divisiechroniek* after the name of its chapters or ‘divisions’. In the *Divisiechroniek* Aurelius presented a brief life of Geertruyd van Oosten (‘Van dat leven suster Gheertruyts van Oosten tot Delft’) beginning with the events of the year 1340, when Geertruyd entered the *Begijnhof* in Delft, until her

¹⁰ Van Buuren, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86 (Van Buuren does not consider the evidence supplied by Van Heussen’s later-published *Batavia Sacra*).

death in 1358.¹¹ The events of the *vita* of Geertruyd narrated in the *Divisiekiecroniek* were not consistently presented in chronological order but included the most important moments of the Delft beguine's life. These were the turning-points of her spiritual and mystical life (e.g. a profound sorrow leading to conversion, the reception of the stigmata, foretelling future events, experiencing temptation, piety on her deathbed) and devotional practices (e.g. spiritual exercises corresponding to the liturgical calendar). The *Divisiekiecroniek* was published by Jan Seversz, a prolific publisher of richly-illustrated books. For this edition Jan Seversz was able to obtain woodcut illustrations from Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533) and other accomplished Netherlandish artists. The woodcut illustrating the *vita* of Geertruyd in the *Divisiekiecroniek*, which showed the beguine kneeling before a life-size figure of the crucified Christ, plainly served as a model for the woodcut that adorned the title leaf of *Het leuen van die Heylighe ende waerdighe maecht Geetruyd van Oosten...* published by Fabri in 1589.¹²

The other source, whose author was mentioned by name by the anonymous compiler of the Louvain *vita*, was the seventh volume of *De probatis Sanctorum historiis...* Its author, Laurentius Surius (Lorenz Saurer; 1522-1578), was a German Carthusian monk, hagiologist, theologian and historian of the Church. Born in Lübeck and probably raised as a Lutheran, Surius was very likely brought back into the fold of the Church by the Dutch champion of the Counter-Reformation, the Nijmegen Jesuit and Doctor of the Church, St. Peter Canisius (Pieter Kanys or Kanees; 1521-1597).¹³ After completing his studies at the universities of Frankfurt-on-the-Oder and Cologne (where he had met Canisius), Surius entered the Carthusian monastery at Cologne (1542). A model of Christian piety and profound scholarship, Surius was held in high esteem by Pope St. Pius V.¹⁴ His most famous work, the hagiological calendar *De probatis Sanctorum historiis...*, was first published in six volumes at Cologne (1570-1577). The second edition, which Surius was unable to complete, appeared in Cologne in 1582 together with an additional seventh volume, edited by a fellow Carthusian, Jacobus Mosander.¹⁵

¹¹ [Aurelius], *Die Cronycke...*, XXIII div., V cap., fol. 204v-205v.

¹² [Aurelius], *op. cit.*, fol. 204v.

¹³ Van Miert, 'Petrus Canisius' in: *NNBW*, vol. v, pp. 91-97.

¹⁴ Kirsch, 'Surius' in: *TCE*, vol. xiv, p. 343.

¹⁵ Surius, Mosander, *Tomus VII. De Probatis Sanctorum historiis, in quem ordine mensium observato relatae sunt cum omnes illae historiae, quae ad secundam sex tomo- rum editionem accesserunt [...] partim ex MSS. monumentis à F. Laurentio Surio huic*

Laurentius Surius' *De probatis Sanctorum historiis...* provided the author of the Louvain *vita* with more detailed information than the *Divisiechroniek*. Surius based his account of the life of Geertruyd van Oosten¹⁶ on Jan Gerbrandszoon van Leiden's *Chronicon Comitum Hollandiae et episcoporum Ultraiectensium* (c. 1470).¹⁷ This compilation was, in turn, a reworking of the *Chronographia* (c. 1350) of the Egmond priest-chronicler Johannes de Beke. A Latin and a vernacular version of Beke's chronicle were produced. The vernacular version, *Chroniken van den Stichte van Utrecht ende van Hollant*, translated in c. 1393, i.e. thirty-five years after Geertruyd's death, is probably the earliest extant Middle Dutch source on Geertruyd's life. Beke's chronicle tells distinctly of the miracle of Geertruyd's reception of the stigmata:

In desen tiden gheschiede in die stede van Delf een wonder, dat wel seggens weert is. Want daer was een reckelike vrouwe, die ons Heren passie mit so groter bernender begheerte plach aen te siene, dat men die teikene van den wonden bescheidenlike sach in hoerre side, in horen handen ende in horen voeten ghelike als si an den beelde waren. Ende die ghemene kerstine lude loveden ende danckeden den ghecruusten Here om dat mirakel, alst wel reden was.¹⁸

In those times there occurred in the town of Delft a miracle that is well worth reporting. Because there was an honest, upright woman who observed the Passion of Our Lord with such ardent desire that one could distinctly witness the signs of the wounds in her side, in her hands and in her feet just like in the image [of Christ]. And the common Christian people, not without reason, praised and thanked the crucified Lord for that miracle.

Jan Gerbrandszoon van Leiden's *Chronicon* additionally served as the basis for Cornelis Aurelius' *Divisiechroniek*. A *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten, also in Latin, dating from 1485-1487, can be found in the *Novale Sanctorum* of Johannes Gielemans.¹⁹ It is possible that one of these sources were referred to, in the title of the *vita*, as the 'old manuscripts' ('oude

operi reservatis, nunc primum opera atque studio F. Jacobi Mosandri Carthusiani collectae et in lucem editae. Cologne: Geruinus Calenius et haeredes Quentelios, 1581.

¹⁶ Surius, Mosander, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-18, contains the following note: 'Incerto quidem autore, sed bona fide conscripta. Nos capita margini adiecimus et stylum nonnihil in gratiam Lectoris contraximus. Haec virgo necdum est in Sanctos relata'.

¹⁷ Carasso-Kok, *Repertorium...*, p. 36.

¹⁸ Beke, *Croniken...*, p. 184.

¹⁹ Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Ser.n. 12708, fol. 58r-59r. Cited by Carasso-Kok, *Repertorium*, pp. 35-36.

geschreven boecken') that served its author as the remaining sources of this compilation.²⁰ Another hypothesis, raised by A.H. Bredero, concerns the existence of a vernacular *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten. If this theory is correct, such a *vita* should have been written in Delft after 1381 (that is, concurrently with Beke's *Chroniken*) in the circles of the organizers of the parish of St. Ursula (for Geertruyd's involvement in the founding of the New Church, see below, **Chapter 6.5**). This *vita*, according to the hypothetical information presented by Bredero, would have therefore preceded the late-medieval Latin sources listed above.²¹

Mainly through Laurentius Surius' *De probatis Sanctorum historiis...*, but also through the earlier Latin and vernacular sources mentioned above, the biography of Geertruyd van Oosten entered a Europe-wide network of historical and hagiographic texts. Shortly after the publication of the seventh volume of Surius' history, the stigmatic from Delft whose life was so rich in miracles was already mentioned (and entirely correctly, as a venerable) in Petrus Canisius' *Martyrologium* (Johannes Mayer: Dillingen 1583) under the date of January 6: 'Item selige gedaechtnuß Getrudis von Oesten, begin zû Delph in Holand, welche die naegermal Christi an ihrem Leib her und trüg'.²²

In a letter cited by the eighteenth-century Catholic church historian Hugo Franciscus van Heussen, Sasbout Vosmeer hinted at '[...] the effort he had made to obtain precise information about the life of St. Boniface and other Dutch saints' ('[...] wat al moeite dat hy aangewendt had om een naukeurige kennis van de levensdaaden van S. Bonifacius, en van de andere Heiligen van ons Vaderland, te bekomen').²³ A summary (or in any case a brief extract) of these saints' lives Vosmeer had compiled out of an 'old (High) German book' ('Als ick daar ter plaatze was, heb ik hun leven, 't welk in een Hoog-duits boek beschreven stond, met korter woorden opgesteld').²⁴ The fact that the book was in German and not in Dutch or Latin might suggest that Vosmeer had studied it while living in Cologne, or perhaps that he had received it from his brother Tilman, also a resident of that city. Was Petrus Canisius' *Martyrologium* the 'German book' that Sasbout Vosmeer had consulted? This question

²⁰ See Van Buuren, 'Geertruyd van Oosten and "Het daghet inden Oosten"', p. 84.

²¹ Bredero, 'De Delftse begijn Gertrui van Oosten', pp. 93-94.

²² Canisius, *Martyrologium*, fol. 7v.

²³ This letter is dated '11 January'; no year is given. [Van Heussen], *Batavia Sacra* [Dutch transl.], vol. iii, p. 157.

²⁴ [Van Heussen], *Batavia Sacra* [Dutch transl.], vol. iii, p. 213.

has to remain an open one, until other sources in the German language are found containing a *vita* of the Delft beguine.

During the 17th century the devotion to Geertruyd van Oosten was propagated in Johannes Bolland's *Acta Sanctorum* (Johannes Meursius: Antwerpen 1643), the most prestigious scholarly Catholic hagiological calendar born out of the Counter-Reformation in the Netherlands,²⁵ as well as in *Generale legende der Heyligen* (Hieronymus Verdussen: Antwerpen 1649), an extensive vernacular calendar of saints' lives compiled by Petrus Ribadineira and Heribertus Rosweyde.²⁶ It has been suggested that Vosmeer's Louvain *vita* of Geertruyd served as one of the sources for Rosweyde.²⁷

The life of Geertruyd was conveyed during the 17th century in non-Catholic sources, but those sources also strongly relied on the existing medieval chronicles and on the hagiographic literature of the Counter-Reformation. Dirck van Bleyswijck's *Beschryvinge der stad Delft* (Delft: Arnold Bon, 1667) cited *in extenso* the life of Geertruyd van Oosten taken from Cornelis Aurelius' *Divisiechroniek*. Although Dirck van Bleyswijck was not sympathetic to the Roman Catholic practice of the veneration of saints, he nevertheless augmented these passages with facts supplied by the *Generale legende* of Ribadineira and Rosweyde, and with information from the *Generale Kerckeliecke Historie* (Hieronymus Verdussen: Antwerpen 1624) of Dionisius Mudzaerts (1578-1635), a Premonstrant from Tongerlo, all of whom were Catholic authors.²⁸

From even a cursory glance at the family of texts produced around the figure of the venerable Geertruyd one can gather that these *vitae* occupied a not unimportant place in the literary landscape of the Catholic Counter-Reformation in the Netherlands. Despite a scarcity of original documents, the hagiographers of the period after 1572 took great care to ensure that their accounts could be verified against the then-available documents. In this context it bears mentioning that Sasbout Vosmeer, if he was indeed the author, collected his information for *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten* from the most trustworthy sources available in the year 1589. By advertising this fact on the title leaf he sent out a signal to Catholic readers that the narrative of Geertruyd's life, and most of all, the visible sign of her stigmata, was based on historically reliable facts. The accounts by medieval and early-modern Dutch chroniclers, which

²⁵ Bollandus, Henschenius, *Acta Sanctorum*, pp. 349-353.

²⁶ Ribadineira, Rosweyde, *Generale legende*, pp. 131-134.

²⁷ For the sources of the *Generale legende* and *Acta Sanctorum* see Bredero, 'De Delftse begijn Gertrui van Oosten', pp. 92-93.

²⁸ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, pp. 305-314.

formed the foundation for Surius's account, were later independently subsumed into the work of 17th century Jesuit hagiologists, especially the Bollandists. In this manner, via texts by Surius and his circle, the *vita* of Geertruyd found a place in the mainstream of scholarly Catholic hagiographic literature in the Netherlands.

6.3. THE READERS AND LISTENERS OF THE LOUVAIN *VITA*

Recent studies into the early-modern literature related to the figure of Geertruyd van Oosten, especially those of A.H. Bredero and A.M.J. van Buuren, have dealt almost exclusively with the authorship and textual history of the available source texts, and with the interpretation of selected passages from these *vitae*.²⁹ The no less important question as to who had been the readers of these literary texts, however, has been still left unanswered. Below we will examine the hypotheses that present themselves with regard to the readership and reception of the *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten. We will study the available evidence for an answer, situating the findings in the context of Sasbout Vosmeer's literary and social networks, as well as in the framework of the literary life of Catholic communities in Delft and elsewhere in the Netherlands during the final decades of the sixteenth century.

It has been argued, especially by A.H. Bredero, that Geetruid van Oosten, a mystic and the first medieval female stigmatic in the Netherlands (the other was St. Lidwina of Schiedam),³⁰ was at the moment of the booklet's publication already somewhat forgotten by the Catholic inhabitants of Delft. This was owing, not least of all, to the fact that no known attempt to ensure canonization had ever been undertaken (for various reasons mentioned by Bredero) either by the beguines, the clergy or regents of Delft before 1572.³¹ At the same time the venerable

²⁹ Of the corpus of research concerning the *vitae* of Geertruyd van Oosten one must mention the most recent studies by A.H. Bredero and A.M.J. van Buuren. A.H. Bredero studied the reasons for Geertruyd van Oosten was never canonized despite the fact that she was locally venerated as a remarkably pious person and stigmatic, while A.M.J. van Buuren reviewed the evidence related to Geertruyd van Oosten and the song 'Het daghet inden Oosten' (for the latter topic see below, **Chapter 6.6**).

³⁰ Bredero, 'De Delftse begijn Gertrui van Oosten', pp. 84-85 and p. 95.

³¹ According to A.H. Bredero, an organized commemoration of Geertruyd van Oosten (e.g. a marked grave) had been neglected by the secular authorities and by some

Geertruyd was regarded, in at least some circles (and certainly by Sasbout Vosmeer), as a saint whose veneration in the post-1572 diocese of Utrecht had to be revived or stimulated. This conviction was supported by existing Latin *vitae* and hagiographic literature circulating in the late 16th century in which Geertruyd was referred to as a saint (*see above, Chapter 6.2.*). The literature produced about Geertruyd van Oosten, as well as other evidence, which will be reviewed below, suggests that during the 17th century a local veneration of Geertruyd as a saint (or in any case a widespread opinion of her sanctity) could be found in Delft. These two not-unrelated considerations can serve as our point of departure for determining the position of the Louvain *vita* in the world of Catholic readers. As a matter of fact, alongside readers we should also look for listeners, because the contents of the booklet were very likely read aloud, as it was quite often done with vernacular religious literature in the early-modern Low Countries.³²

The evidence supplied by the Louvain booklet matches what we know about Sasbout Vosmeer's activities as a promoter of devotion to saints and candidates to the sainthood from Holland. A.M.J. van Buuren was able to identify records of '[...] saints' lives and offices written by Sasbout', which had been prepared with a larger publication in mind.³³ Furthermore Sasbout Vosmeer formulated special instructions to the effect that litanies to the saints and prayers for the Netherlands were to be read out in the churches of the diocese of Utrecht. In these litanies special mention was to be made of 'the names of the patrons and the saints, who through their labors planted and nourished the faith and piety in this bishopric, and thanks to whose holy relics and intercession that bishopric has thrived safely to this day' ('[...] de naamen der Patroonen en der Heiligen / die het geloof en de godvruchtigheid in dit Bisdom door hunnen arbeid geplant en aangequeekt hebben / en door welker heilige Overblijfselen en voorbiddinge het zelvde Bisdom tot noch toe verciert en beschermt is geweest...').³⁴ Interestingly, the litany cited by Van Heus-

of the Delft clergy during the 14th and 15th century. This arguably had to do with a) the lower social status of Geertruyd as opposed to other beguines b) the beguines' fear of attracting attention owing to the stigmata of Geertruyd, and c) hostility between the parishes of the Church of St. Hippolyte and that of Church of St. Ursula. This explanation and arguments are supplied by Bredero, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-94.

³² The reading of religious and secular literature, both aloud and in silence, during the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance is described in various situational contexts by Pleij, 'Met een boekje in het hoekje?', pp. 16-48.

³³ Van Buuren, 'Geertruyd van Oosten...', p. 85.

³⁴ Cf. Van Heussen, *Batavia sacra*, vol. iii, pp. 213-214.

sen does mention a 'S. Gertrudis'. As no other saint of this name was commemorated in the diocese of Utrecht, the litany most likely referred to the beguine from Delft. This may supply further proof of Sasbout Vosmeer's involvement in promoting her veneration as a saint, which (in the light of sources available to him) he unreservedly believed her to be.³⁵ Evidence of the fact that a veneration of Geertruyd as a saint had been taken into consideration by the editors of the booklet is supplied by the fact that in addition to the narrative of the beguine's life it featured an antiphon, a *versus* and a prayer through the intercession of the Delft mystic, as well as a devotional image of the *arma Christi*. On the other hand, the lack of an *imprimatur* might point to a lack of official sanction for such a publication, though other reasons might equally account for its absence.

To begin with, we can situate the reception of the Louvain *vita* in the context of the Church's soon-to-be-formed (but as yet unofficial) *missio Hollandica*. A hypothesis that presents itself is that literature advertising the Catholic religious identity of Delft through the biography of a saint or candidate for the sainthood would have been a useful instrument in Vosmeer's mission to obtain support for the clandestine Church in the northern provinces. The addressees of such a 'promotional' devotional publication would have been found then among the clergy and educated lay Catholics in the southern Netherlands. There is some highly spectacular evidence to suggest that Sasbout Vosmeer's circle of readers did indeed include prominent dignitaries of the Church. The eighteenth-century historian Hugo Franciscus van Heussen stated in his biography of the vicar-apostolic (in the *Batavia sacra*), that Vosmeer had the intention of writing a collection of saints' lives specifically situated in the regional context of the Netherlands. Vosmeer's report of his visit to Rome written around 1583 revealed that he had read one of these hagiographic narratives to the cardinal and theologian Caesar Baronius (1538 – 1607):

Ik heb, zegt hy daar / gewag gemaakt van een korte historische beschrijvinge / die ik onder handen had genomen; en die Baronius geprezen heeft, en gaarne had gezien.³⁶

³⁵ The only other saint of this name from the Low Countries is St. Gertrude of Nivelles (Nijvel) who was venerated in Brabant, see Ott, 'Gertrude of Nivelles' in: *TCE*, vol. vi, pp. 533-534 (see below, **Chapter 6.4.**). This information, as well as the archival findings of A.J.M. van Buuren, tend to contradict the claim that nothing is known of a local veneration of Geertruyd van Oosten made by Bredero, 'De Delftse begijn Gertrui van Oosten', pp. 84-85.

³⁶ [H. van Heussen], *Batavia Sacra* [Dutch transl.], vol. iii, p. 213.

'I have', [Vosmeer] wrote, 'undertaken to write a brief historical narrative, which I had completed; Baronius praised it, and he had been pleased to see it'.

No titles were mentioned, so the least that can be gathered from this scant information is that whatever Baronius might have received, it would have been probably in Latin and not in Dutch. Given Baronius' credentials as a theologian, it is most likely that such a narrative would have been more than just a dry summary of the historical facts. Yet if Sasbout Vosmeer had intended, after all, to bring about the canonization of Geertruyd van Oosten, perhaps through his contacts in Rome, then a booklet such as the Louvain *vita*, or more likely, a Latin translation, would have served this purpose quite well. For a canonization to take place it would have to be preceded by a *cultus*. This condition was impossible to be satisfied, especially in the uncertain conditions of clandestine religious life after the Revolt, without appropriate instruction about the saint in question that could only be stimulated through literature.

This is not the only hypothesis about the function of the Louvain *vita* that can be raised here. The fact that the Louvain volume was published anonymously accords with the fact that its author (whom we assume to be Sasbout Vosmeer) would have wanted to avoid having his name seen in print by the Holland authorities in order not to compromise his activities. The narrative of the *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten does indeed contain numerous indications to the effect that its unnamed author or initiator was not only interested in supplying readers with factual information about a beguine mystic but also, and perhaps most of all, fostering the rebuilding of Catholic identity by stimulating Catholic religious life in general. This might suggest that the group of readers was intended to comprise of Catholics living in the Netherlands, whose religious sensibility, possibly impacted by the Protestant critique of this type of devotion, had to be reinforced through religious instruction.

In many ways the Louvain biography of Geertruyd van Oosten provided remarkable opportunities for engaging lay listeners or the religious (e.g. nuns and beguines) in moral and religious instruction. The contents of the *vita* showed the venerable Geertruyd as a paragon of Christian faith and virtue, and therefore as a true example of sainthood. Besides references built into the text and explaining the theological significance of Geertruyd's actions and experiences, a number of marginal glosses with quotations informed the reader about the consistency of events from her life with the Holy Scripture. This catechetic component conformed very well to the models of counter-Reformation religious instruction in the Netherlands, both north and south of the great rivers. There existed,

for instance, an awareness on the Catholic side of the need to provide an answer to the Protestant critique of Catholic doctrine regarding the theology of sainthood. This answer had to be twofold. On the one hand, the significance of saints' lives for the devotional practices of Catholics had to be explained; and on the other hand, the lives of the individual saints had to be re-written in the vernacular, in the combined light of post-Tridentine Roman Catholic theology and the new Scriptural and historical scholarship of the Renaissance.³⁷

The best answer to critique was not a direct polemic but a lucid explanation of Catholic doctrine on its own terms. Such an explanation could serve to strengthen the faith and the Catholic identity of the reader or listener. The very first thing explained in the preface to the *vita* of the venerable Geertruyd was how the lives of saints could be regarded as a source of spiritual benefits. That the lives of saints were a perfect example to be followed was explained by the Catholic Church during the Renaissance in Latin and vernacular Catechisms. The Jesuit Ludovicus Makeblijde, in a commentary on the Catechism, *Den schat der christelicke leeringhe* (Joachimus Trognesius: 2nd ed. Antwerpen 1620), stated, for instance, 'How does the Catholic Church honor God's Saints? She labors to imitate their virtuous example' ('Wat eere doet de Catholijcke Kercke den Heylighen Godts? [...] Sy arbeydt om hunne deughdelicke exempelen nae te volghen').³⁸

Although the explanation given in the preface to the *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten was given in the same Catechism-like format of a question and answer, it went further and was more specific. Its sources were three quotations derived from the writings of St. Gregory the Great, (pseudo-) Bernard and the Letter to the Hebrews. All of these had a strong persuasive quality, and each directly addressed the reader's intention to lead a more virtuous Christian existence. Firstly, the reader was encouraged to examine how an example of good behavior had the power to transform the lives of human beings. An individual who opened his heart to the virtuous life of others found that their actions changed his life for the better. The virtues of the saints were fashioned by God into an example to be followed ('Tot dien eynde heeft god die duechden der Heyligen ons gestelt tot exempel...') by Christians on their way to the Kingdom

³⁷ The most notable polemicist who applied a historical method to reveal the unbroken continuity of Catholic dogma throughout the history of the Church was Sasbout Vosmeer's mentor Caesar Baronius. See Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, p. 749.

³⁸ Makeblijde, *Den schat der christelicke leeringhe...*, pp. 213-214.

of Heaven.³⁹ This passage came from St. Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job*, 22, vii, 14. The *Moralia*, written around 590, were a series of commentaries on the Book of Job. To each passage St. Gregory applied three methods of exegesis: historical, allegorical and moral (or eschatological). The passage cited by the author of the Leuven *vita* comes from the latter (moral) category of St. Gregory's commentaries. Owing to the emphasis placed on the moral interpretation of the Bible, the *Moralia* were immensely popular in the late-medieval Netherlands as a treatise on Christian ethics, especially among the members of monastic communities.⁴⁰

Secondly, the reward of imitating the example of the saints (as described in the preface to the Leuven *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten) was that one could join them in communion and reign together with them in God's kingdom. While this particular passage (attributed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux) has not been identified, the sermons of St. Bernard, namely *Sermones de tempore*, *Sermones de Sanctis*, *Sermones de diversis* and *Sermones in Canticum Canticorum*, were likewise widely read in monastic circles in the Netherlands.⁴¹ Finally, a passage from the letter of St. Paul to the Hebrews, referring in its most immediate sense to the prophets of the Old Testament, described (after a longstanding tradition of Biblical interpretation) the heroic role of Christian saints as witnesses to the power of faith and as intercessors for those on earth:

For the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, Barac, Samson, Jephthe, David, Samuel, and the prophets: Who by faith conquered kingdoms, wrought justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, recovered strength from weakness, became valiant in battle, put to flight the armies of foreigners: Women received their dead raised to life again. But others were racked, not accepting deliverance, that they might find a better resurrection.⁴²

³⁹ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 1v.

⁴⁰ A copy of the *Moralia* is preserved in the form of a manuscript coming from the Utrecht cloister of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine (*Regulierenklooster*) at the University Library, Utrecht, Hs. 87. Cf. 'Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia in Job*' no. 16, Van der Horst et al. (ed.), *Handschriften en Oude Drukken uit de Utrechtse Universiteitsbibliotheek*, pp. 64.

⁴¹ A manuscript of the Sermons of St. Bernard from the Monastery of St. Laurence (*Sint Laurentiusklooster*) at Oostbroek, copied in 1476-1477 by Victor die Snyer, has been preserved at the University Library, Utrecht, Hs.8.K.26; see 'Bernardus, *Verzameling preken en Homiliën*', no. 46, Van der Horst et al. (ed.), *Handschriften en Oude Drukken van de Utrechtse Universiteitsbibliotheek*, pp. 118-121.

⁴² Hebr. 11: 33.

The sources quoted in the introduction to the *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten collectively emphasized the spiritual relevance of saints' lives. A *vita* was not merely a historical biography, but a powerful life-changing influence on the world. Christians were encouraged to reflect upon and to imitate the saints whose lives were compared by St. Gregory to a beacon guiding all those wishing to advance on the path of salvation.⁴³ That the life of Geertruyd was presented as such a guiding beam of light made her *vita* even more relevant and rewarding for devout Catholic readers and listeners in the early-modern Low Countries.

6.4. READING IN THE BEGUINAGE: CONTEXTS FOR THE RECEPTION OF THE LOUVAIN *VITA*

An audience for the insignificant-looking Louvain *vita* may be sought with some certainty in the circles of the beguines of the Low Countries. At this point a few words are in order about the beguine movement as it developed in the Netherlands during the later Middle Ages and into the early modern period. The beguines were women who did not take religious vows but who formed religious communities where they lived in chastity under the pastoral care of a chaplain. They were known as *mulieres religiosae* ('religious women') or *sanctae virgines* ('holy virgins'). The beguine movement was a heterogeneous one: the 'cloistered' Netherlandish beguines, a movement that arose around 1200, differed in character and organization from the earlier 'mendicant' beguines in France (and their male counterparts, the begards) from which the name 'beguine' actually originated. The term 'beguine', appearing from the early 13th century, was initially a negative one (perhaps derived from 'albiguense' by the opponents of the movement). After having been first applied to the suppressed heretical groups, this name was later transferred to the orthodox *mulieres religiosae*, even though it had actually 'never entirely lost its pejorative connotations'.⁴⁴

⁴³ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 1v.

⁴⁴ Simons, *Cities of Ladies*, p. 36. For the origins of the beguine movement see esp. Simons, *op.cit.*, esp. pp. 19-60; for the organization of beguine life in the medieval Low Countries (with reference to Delft) see Brandt, *Over macht en overwicht*, esp. p. 346-592; Denslagen, 'Begijnhoven in Noord-Nederlandse steden', pp. 205-224; Koorn, *Begijnhoven in Holland en Zeeland*; Post, *Handboek van de kerkgeschiedenis*, vol. ii, pp. 216-217.

The informally-organized French beguines of the 12th and 13th century were especially liable to lapse into heresy (one of these was Marguerite Porete, a beguine mystic burned at the stake in Paris). The Netherlandish beguines, by contrast, were generally orthodox Catholics. After an initial phase represented by informal communities, the beguine movement in the Netherlands entered its second, institutionalized phase. Regular beguinages started springing up in towns across the Low Countries possibly after the formal approval given by Pope Gregory IX to the beguine movement in 1230-1233. Ultimately, after serious charges had been levelled at the beguine movement in France, the beguines of the Low Countries were cleared of the suspicion of heretical views by Pope John XXII (1316-1334) on the condition that their rather haphazard communities were placed under regular pastoral supervision.⁴⁵

The etymologies that one comes across in early-modern Catholic literature in the Low Countries generally derive the term 'beguine' from St. Begga (615-693). Believed to have been the founder of the beguines, St. Begga was the daughter of Pepin of Landen, majordomo of Austrasia, and St. Ida of Nivelles (592-652). Moreover, one of St. Begga's siblings was St. Gertrude of Nivelles, the patron saint of the *Groot Begijnhof* at Louvain. The figure of St. Begga was often set as an example for beguines in the Low Countries during the early modern period, for instance in this poem advertising the Louvain beguinage:

Van Begga hebben de Beggyntjens naem en zeden,
Dees Heyligh Hertogin heeft eerst de baen betreden,
Die naer haer ingegaen soo menig duysent zyn
En hebben naem en daet verdient van goey Beggyn.⁴⁶

To Begga the beguines owe their name and virtue; // That holy duchess [of Brabant] first trod the path // Along which thousands of others later chose to walk // Earning by their deeds the name of good beguines.

Etymologies other than this one were given as well during the early-modern period, but all revealed a telling tendency to situate the origins of the beguine movement squarely within the realm of orthodox Catholicism. This was also the expectation of early-modern Catholic readers of literature about the beguine movement. Lambert le Bègue (Lambertus Bega) was a priest from Liège who is believed by some to have founded the beguine movement between c. 1170 and c. 1200.⁴⁷ Dionisius Mudza-

⁴⁵ Post, *Handboek van de kerkgeschiedenis*, vol. ii, p. 217.

⁴⁶ *Het leven Van de seer Edele Doorluchtigste en H. Begga Hertoginne van Brabant*, p. 8.

⁴⁷ Cited by Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 315.

erts (1578-1635), a Premonstrant from Tongerlo, emphasized the orthodox credentials of Lambert le Bègue in his *Generale Kerckeliicke Historie* (Hieronymus Verdussen: Antwerpen 1624). While historical sources tend to confirm Mudzaerts' belief that Bega was a founder of the beguines, modern scholars add that '[...] Lambert's story offers a startling portrait of a vigorous and ambitious lay religiosity, straddling the border of orthodoxy and heresy, from which the beguine movement was born'.⁴⁸ Yet despite the efforts by early-modern writers like Mudzaerts to present him as an orthodox patron of the beguines, Lambert le Bègue was nevertheless regarded in many counter-Reformation Catholic circles as a rather untrustworthy figure. The humanist historian Erycius Puteanus (Hendrik van der Putten, 1574-1646), the successor of Justus Lipsius at the university of Louvain, delivered a notable critique of Le Bègue in his eulogy of the beguine communities ('Keur-Iae Lof-stemme over den naem ende oorspronck der Beggynen').⁴⁹ Owing to this kind of critique it was not Lambert le Bègue but St. Begga who was far more commonly believed to have been the founder of the beguine movement; the latter remained, moreover, its unquestionable patron saint in the Netherlands. A devotional print made from an etching by Michiel Snyders (c. 1625) shows St. Begga as the foundress of the beguine communities in the Netherlands, surrounded by two kneeling beguines, one of whom, as a matter of fact, is Geertruyd van Oosten.⁵⁰

The beguines were initially (during the 12th/13th century) wealthy noblewomen or members of prominent town families. This situation changed from the early 14th century onwards when increasing numbers of women from lower social classes started entering the Netherlandish beguinages. Apart from the most frequently mentioned demographic reason (the high number of unmarried women in medieval cities)⁵¹ at least three other factors can be stated. Most importantly, beguinages were one of the few places in medieval society, besides the more strictly-organized monasteries, which provided a safe environment for solitary unmarried women (maidens and widows). Secondly, the growing theo-

⁴⁸ Simons, *Cities of Ladies*, pp. 24-34.

⁴⁹ Elias of St. Theresa, *Het leven van Sinte Begga Hertoghinne van Brabant*. For Erycius Puteanus' eulogy of the beguines see *ibid.*, pp. 476-482.

⁵⁰ Although not noticed as such by recent researchers, this devotional image provides another strong argument for the presence of a revived *cultus* of the venerable Geertruyd van Oosten in the northern Netherlands after 1572. Haarlem, Archief voor Kennemerland no. 343. A facsimile is reproduced by Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 154.

⁵¹ Cf. Brand, *Over macht en overwicht*, p. 349.

logical respectability of the beguine movement is likely to have contributed to a rise in the number of candidates among pious women. Thirdly, owing to the participation of wealthy women the beguinages acquired the additional function of a charitable institution. A further incentive to entering a beguinage was probably the fact that beguines in the Low Countries could leave the community if they chose to marry.⁵² Wealthy beguines set up a fund for those less well-off, sometimes even providing the latter with a regular income.⁵³ An additional economic benefit of entering a beguinage was that a beguine could bequeath her money and movables to her family, a course of action that would have been impossible in a monastery.⁵⁴ These factors made these institutions a very favorable place for both younger and older women. The advantages offered by the beguinage contributed to the enormous popularity of this moderate religious 'middle life' ('middel leuen')⁵⁵ in the late-medieval and early-modern Low Countries, as being a form of *vita contemplativa* which avoided the extremes of either a worldly life or of a more strictly disciplined monastic existence.

The funds injected by wealthy Netherlandish noblewomen into the beguinages allowed such sites to grow into significant urban housing complexes. Such beguinages, *curtis* or *curtia beguinarum*, represented the basic model of the north-Netherlandish *begijnhof*. A typical *begijnhof* consisted of a series of individual dwellings housing the richest inhabitants (and sometimes their female relations), a common hall for the less-privileged, an infirmary, a chapel and sometimes a series of specialized communal buildings (e.g. a brewery, a bakery, an agricultural complex, etc.).⁵⁶

Before the Dutch Revolt approximately 300 beguinages had been established in the southern and northern Netherlands.⁵⁷ This number included two beguinages in Delft: the short-lived *Falie-begijnhof* in the *Rietveld* to the north of the *Markt* was simply a collection of small wooden huts;⁵⁸ it corresponded to the earliest model of a *begijnhof* located just outside the perimeter of the town. Besides the *Falie-begijnhof*, there was

⁵² D. Mudzaerts, *Kerckeliicke historie*, cited in: Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 316.

⁵³ Brand, *Over macht en overwicht*, pp. 346-347.

⁵⁴ Brand, *op. cit.*, p. 352.

⁵⁵ *Het leven van Sinte Begga...*, p. 414.

⁵⁶ Simons, *Cities of Ladies*, p. 51.

⁵⁷ Simons, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

⁵⁸ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, pp. 307.

the larger *Bagijnhof* in the *Oude Delft*, founded by Maria van der Made in 1283. This was a much larger rectangular cluster of buildings in the center of the city, where a chapel, and afterwards a church consecrated to St. John the Apostle was completed in 1369. Already in 1302 the beguinage housed twenty-five beguines. After the Dutch Revolt the church at the beguinage, which had been dismantled in 1573, was replaced by one and then two clandestine chapels situated within the compound.⁵⁹ Unlike the monasteries the beguinage was not dissolved, and its inhabitants, the beguines, were allowed to continue using the buildings as tenants. Regulations passed in 1575 permitted everyone to settle at the beguinage, turning it into a semi-private space where practicing Roman Catholics could enjoy relative freedom.⁶⁰

What was it like to visit the Catholic community at the Delft *Bagijnhof* in the years after the Dutch Revolt?⁶¹ Dirck van Bleyswijck's *Beschryvinge der stad Delft* (1667) would have provided a curious seventeenth-century tourist with detailed information:

Hier aen sullen wy het Groote Begynhof [...] laten volgen, zijnde tegenwoordigh noch in wesen ende gelegen aen de Oude Delft na het Noort-eynde toe, hebbende een groote ruyme poort voor aen straet, hedendaegs om redenen sonder deuren, en by nacht soo wel als des daegs altijd ongesloten, dragende in haer voor-hoofd een oude vervalle en mismaeckte *Basreleve* van witten Orduyn, zijnde een S. Antonis tentatie of so yets diergelijcks; dese Steen en gantsche gedaente van de Poort, mitsgaders verder muyr-werck van dit hof, schijnt wel uyt te wijsen een seer hoogh en ouderdom, maer het recht bescheyt wanneer dit Begijn-hof gesticht, kan men niet geweten, nademael des selfs Brieven en Papieren, mits den Oorlogh en veranderinge, gedolven ende in de aerde begraven zijnde, gantschelijcken zijn vergaen ende onleesbaer bevonden; de voorsz poort ingetreden zijnde komt men op een groot lanckachtigh binnen-pleyn verdeelt in twee vacken met boomen beplant, rontsom omcingelt met gepaveyde wegen ofte straten voor-by de huysen en wooningen (die aldaer in groote getale zijn) henen, aen de Noort-west zijde noch een achterstraet hebbende in het midden van het hof ingaende en ten westen weder uytkomende, by en ontrent een ander uytgang ofte poort deses hofs van achteren aen Stadts Wallen; op het eerste vack van het binnen-pleyn pleech wel eer een Kerck ofte Capel te staen met een Toorn van een fatsoenelijcke hoochte en groote, blijckende by verscheyde oude Kaer-

⁵⁹ Van der Klooster, 'De Oud-Katholieke kerk op het Bagijnhof', pp. 28-29.

⁶⁰ Wijbenga, *Delft*, vol. ii, pp. 148-149.

⁶¹ Contemporary information about the *Bagijnhof* in Delft is also supplied by Van Heussen, Van Rijn, *Oudheden en gestichten van Delft en Delfland*, pp. 202-210 and Boitet, *Beschryving der stad Delft*, pp. 385-398. The *Bagijnhof* (spelled in this way instead of the usual *bagijnhof*) is the proper name of this Delft beguinage.

ten meermalen vermelt, het ander vack tot een Kerck-hof ghedient hebbende...⁶²

Now we will continue on to the large beguinage [...] still existing to this day and located on the northern extremity [Noordeinde] of Oude Delft; [the Bagijnhof] has a tall spacious gate coming out on the street, which now, for one reason or other, has no doors and is open day and night; in the tympanum [of this gate] there is an old and heavily damaged limestone bas-relief showing the temptation of St. Anthony or something of that sort [actually, St. John on Patmos – MP]; this stone and the architecture of the gate as well as the masonry suggest a building of great antiquity but no specific information about the founding of the Bagijnhof can be obtained because the letters and papers which had been buried in the ground during the war and the troubles [i.e. the Dutch Revolt] had become illegible.⁶³ Walking further through this gate one arrives at a longish rectangular courtyard divided in two sections where trees have been planted; it is surrounded on all sides by paved paths leading to the houses and apartments [inside the beguinage] (of which there are many); on the north-west side there is a back alley starting in the middle of the courtyard and leading to the town wall through a second exit or gate on the western side. In the first section of the courtyard there used to be a church or chapel with a rather tall spire, whereas the other section was designated as a cemetery...

On his exploratory journey through the beguinage Van Bleyswijck was given the cold shoulder by its Catholic inhabitants who even refused to admit him into the room where Geertruyd had died. While this incident can serve to illustrate the understandably tense relations and deep mistrust between Protestants and Catholics in early-modern Delft, Van Bleyswijck's eye-witness account is also highly interesting in that it offers fresh evidence of a local cult of the venerable Geertruyd in the mid-17th century:

[...] midderwijl hebbe ick van besyden aen eens wel ende te recht verstaen, ende sulcx my kennelijk is, dat t'eeniger plaetse, het sy van hier of op het ander Begijnhof, het kamertje daer dese H. Suster op geleeft heeft ende gestorven is, ofte (soo men pretendeert) de voorschreve wonder-teecken en ontfangen heeft, als noch by de superstieuse en bygeloovigst Roomsche gesinden in grooter veneratie en eerbiedigheyt ghehouden wert, ende by vele

⁶² Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, pp. 314.

⁶³ The destruction of documents reported by Van Bleyswijck was contradicted by Van Heussen and Van Rijn in *Oudheden en gestichten van Delft en Delfland...*, p. 203. A plausible explanation is that the Catholic custodians of the Begijnhof had invented this story as an excuse to prevent Van Bleyswijck from inspecting their archives.

Begijnkens en andere blintyverige zieltjens jaerlijcks met haer ordinarische gebedekens metter dousijnen, in bedertganck en andersints wert besocht; welckers aengaende de onderrechingen van recht bescheyt, by den genen die sulcx wel ende best wisten, uyt al te grooten suspicie en achterdencken, aen my is gheexcuseert ende geweygert.⁶⁴

[...] *meanwhile I received all kinds of information to the effect that, as I understood it, this saintly nun lived and died in one of the rooms in this or the other beguinage [i.e. Grote Begijnhof or Falie-Begijnhof] or (as they pretend it to be) received the above-mentioned stigmata there, for it is still held in great veneration by the superstitious Papists, and many beguines and other simple souls come to visit it each year by the dozen, saying their prayers, like on a pilgrimage; however, those who possessed the exact information regarding [this room] denied it to me on account of their extreme suspicion.*

The continuity of the cult of Geertruyd van Oosten in Delft, the manifestations of which Van Bleyswijck described in this passage,⁶⁵ would have been sustained by devotional practices and oral narratives but also by written literature that could be read (aloud) by a group of Catholics. When Sasbout Vosmeer was living in Delft, virtually a few steps away from the *Bagijnhof*, such an audience would have plausibly included the beguines still living at the Delft beguinage, or their successors, the pious Catholic women known as *klopjes* (see below, **Chapter 6.5.** and **8.3.**). We may assume that groups reading or listening to the Louvain *vita* of Geertruyd (alone or together with any of the earlier vernacular texts on which it was based) had contributed to rebuilding this *cultus* in the period when the Louvain *vita* was published, and that the same groups sustained it until the period when Dirck van Bleyswijck visited the beguinage in the mid-17th century.

Given the general scarcity of information on the literary activities of Delft Catholics in the years just after the Dutch Revolt, the reception of the Louvain *vita* in Delft has to remain for the time being an open question. However, yet another potential reader has to be mentioned in the context of the literary networks that came to be created around the figure of the venerable Geertruyd van Oosten. Johannes Stalpart van der Wiele, one of the priests who came to Delft in 1612, developed a similar interest

⁶⁴ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 315.

⁶⁵ The accuracy of the report made by Van Bleyswijck of pilgrimages to see the room where Geertruyd had lived was called in question by Van Heussen and Van Rijn, *Oudheden en gestichten van Delft en Delfland*, p. 210. The authors of the *Oudheden en gestichten*, however, accepted that private individuals ('simple women') might have sought the intercession of Geertruyd van Oosten, *ibid.*

in Dutch saints as Sasbout Vosmeer who had lived there three decades earlier. Stalpart van der Wiele's Delft home was the beguinage. Did he come into possession of the materials that Sasbout had been gathering there for a planned (but unfinished) collection of hagiographic texts, of which a *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten was to have been but a part? Such a conjecture is not implausible, but it has yet to be explored, because still very little is known about the goings-on in the Catholic literary and religious circles of Delft during the late 16th century and early 17th century.

What is certain, however, is that Stalpart van der Wiele wrote a devotional song about the venerable Geertruyd van Oosten for his *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen* (1634 and 1635).⁶⁶ This song, written with the intention that it would be sung in a non-liturgical context on the day of the commemoration of Geertruyd van Oosten (6 January), provides a missing element of continuity. It is the intermediary link in a network of texts beginning with Sasbout Vosmeer's attempts to revive a *cultus* of the Delft mystic (whom he and his contemporaries considered to be a saint) around the year 1585, and ending with Dirck van Bleyswijck's account of the private veneration of Geertruyd at the beguinage, which was recorded as taking place around the middle of the seventeenth century.

Since next to nothing is known about the life of the beguines in Delft around 1585, one may look for the sake of comparison to the beguinages of the southern Netherlands. The *vita* of Geertrui van Oosten was published in Louvain, a town that was, perhaps not coincidentally, the location of one of the largest beguinages in the Low Countries, the *Groot Begijnhof*. It is not inconceivable that the Louvain beguines might have expressed interest in a beguine saint from Delft. The Louvain beguinage arose in the shadow of a monastery inhabited by the canons regular of the rule of St. Augustine. The patron saint of this monastery, established by Henry I of Brabant in 1206, was St. Gertrude of Nivelles (626-659), the sister of St. Begga. Both the monastery and the beguinage at Louvain would have provided a favorable environment for reading the lives of saints in the vernacular. The practice of collective reading during meals in the rectory was as common in the Low Countries during the late Middle Ages and the Early-Modern Period as it is to this day in Catholic monasteries throughout the world. These readings often followed the liturgical calendar and a staple favorite were the lives of the saints derived from the *Legenda aurea* (in the vernacular) or other sources.⁶⁷ It is

⁶⁶ [Stalpart van der Wiele], *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*, [no. 16], pp. 48-50. For this song see Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, pp. 154-155.

⁶⁷ See Scheepsmas, 'Illustere voorbeelden', pp. 261-281.

therefore likely that the beguines, possibly through the initiative of their spiritual advisor, might have requested the permission to adapt a Latin *vita* or a concise historical account into a longer moralizing narrative in the vernacular.

The hypothesis that the beguines of Louvain would have been familiar with the *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten is supported by sources other than literature. The church of the *Groot Begijnhof* had in its possession a painting of St. Begga, on which the saint, the founder of the beguine communities ('*Sancta Begga fundatrix begginarum*') was depicted as protecting with her mantle her spiritual children, kings and pious beguines. Among the latter, the figure of Geertruyd van Oosten can be discerned, extending her hands to reveal her stigmata.⁶⁸ This painting can be dated to at least 1629,⁶⁹ i.e. before the publication of the *vitae* of Geertruyd in the *Generale legende* or the *Acta Sanctorum*. It provides convincing evidence that already at this stage the addressees of the painting, the beguines of Louvain, would have been fully aware of the most significant facts from the life of Geertruyd van Oosten.

There are yet further indications that south-Netherlandish beguines can be included among the readers of the *vitae* of Geertruyd van Oosten. A late and (perhaps partly for this reason) hardly ever mentioned link in the transmission of the biography of Geertruyd van Oosten⁷⁰ was an anonymous *vita* of St. Begga, *Het leven van de seer edele doorluchtigste H. Begga* (Antwerp: widow of Petrus Jacobs, 1712), which also contained a collection of lives of outstanding beguines ('een Cort Begryp van de Levens der Salige, Godtvruchtige en Lof-weerdige Beggyntjens Der Vermaerde en Hoogh-Gepresen Beggyn-hoven').⁷¹ The structure of this collection suggests that it was specifically designed as instructive devotional reading for beguines in the southern Netherlands. There, among

⁶⁸ 'De heilige Begga als schutsmantelheilige', Museum Louvain S/58/O. See also *Schatten der armen*, pp. 157-161.

⁶⁹ This painting ('cum subscriptione s. *Begga fundatrix Begginarum*, in quibus adiunguntur genuflexae habitu moderno Beghinarum, cum signis sanctitatis siue coronis in capite, S. Geertruyt van Oosten...') is referred to in a Latin historical treatise from 1629 written by the Antwerp canon Petrus Coens, *Disquisitio historica de origine begginarum et beghinagiorum Belgii*, Leodii, Apud Christianum Ouwers Iun. propé S. Dionysium sub signo Patientiae, 1629, fol. 141.

⁷⁰ This source is listed neither by Carasso-Kok, *Repertorium*, pp. 34-35 nor by Beukers, 'Oosten, Geertrui van' in: *DVN*.

⁷¹ [anon.], *Het leven Van de seer Edele Doorluchtigste en H. Begga Hertoginne van Brabant*, p. 8. On pp. 155-159 this edition contains a version of the *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten.

the lives of other pious beguines, the readers of this volume could find yet another vernacular version of the life of Geertruyd van Oosten. The existence of such a *vita* shows that biographies of the beguine stigmatic from Delft did indeed circulate in the specific context of reading-matter destined for a beguinage.

Finally, it is certain that Christocentric devotion, especially with a focus on the Passion of Christ, was a widespread practice in Netherlandish beguinages. At Louvain, for example, a demonstrable link existed between the writers of Passion literature and the chaplain of the *Groot Begijnhof*, leading J. van Herwaarden to conclude that such Passion literature, written only two decades before the Louvain *vita*, was 'presumably intended for a female readership'.⁷² That the meditations on the Passion of Christ (connected to the cult of the Holy Cross) were another popular devotional theme, was reflected in the pictorial art produced for the *Groot Begijnhof*.⁷³ The connection between the Louvain *vita* and Passion-centered beguine spirituality can be all the more readily visualized when one considers that this treatise was explicitly advertised by an etching on the title leaf showing Geertruyd adoring Christ on the Cross. All this by itself suggests that a narrative of Christocentric devotion, especially one whose protagonist was a beguine, would have appealed to beguines living in the *begijnhof* of Louvain.

6.5. EXEMPLARY CHRISTIAN BEHAVIORS: MORAL AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE LOUVAIN VITA

The *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten can be easily called an exemplary one. First of all, the anonymous author or compiler of the *vita* took great care to mould existing texts into a readable and at the same time instructive hagiographic narrative which could serve the readers or listeners as a model of Christian behavior. Secondly, the text of *Het leuen [...] van Geertruyd van Oosten* was also well adapted to explaining some truths of the faith through the example of events from the life of the Delft beguine. This kind of information, assigned to the domain of, respectively, *parenesis* and *catechesis* (i.e. an exhortation to virtuous deeds and religious instruction), was planted quite unobtrusively, in such a way that it

⁷² Van Herwaarden, *Between Saint James and Erasmus*, p. 73.

⁷³ Baert, *Een erfenis van heilig hout*, p. 173, n. 74.

did not distract the reader from following with interest the events of the life of the Delft beguine. Although apart from the preface, neither the instruction in the truths of the faith nor the appeal on the readers (or listeners), both male and female, to conform to the example of Geertruyd, were explicitly stated, the narrative displays ample evidence of both. In a sense, therefore, one may go on to say that the *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten reflected, albeit in very modest form, the main tenets of classical rhetoric, where the fundamental function of a literary text (*officia oratoris*) was to unite teaching (*docere*) with persuasion (*movere*) while appealing to the reader's sense of beauty (*delectare*).⁷⁴

Strategies from the terrain of *catechesis* and *parenesis* were implemented in each of the consecutive stages of the narrative. The first phase comprised Geertruyd's early life, beginning with her birth in a family of cottagers in Voorburg, a village located to the east of Delft, her childhood, including the virtuous upbringing that she received from her parents, and her coming to Delft as a young girl.⁷⁵ It is striking in this context how strongly the text of the *vita* stressed the significance of a Christian family-life in the upbringing of a child. In particular, the profound role of the parents was emphasized with respect to providing their child with a solid moral education. Such an education was of tremendous importance irrespectively of the parents' material status in worldly terms ('Haer Ouders [...] niet rijc wesende na de werelt, haer Dochter eerlijc nochtans opghebracht hebben').⁷⁶ That children had to be imbued with sound morals while they were still young was a frequent theme of treatises on childrearing written and published in the Netherlands after 1572, although even before this date treatises on the family were translated into the vernacular. Around 1500 one of the Delft printers, Christiaen Snellaert or Henrick Eckert van Homberch, brought out a Middle Dutch version of *Epistola de gubernatione rei familiaris* attributed erroneously to St. Bernard of Clairvaux.⁷⁷ Subsequent treatises on the subject of the family and childrearing reflected, on the one hand,

⁷⁴ For models of classical rhetoric in the Latin religious texts of the Renaissance see Budzisz, *Biblia i tradycja antyczna*, p. 11. On the rhetorical functions of vernacular Dutch literature during the Renaissance see e.g. Jansen, *Decorum: observaties over de literaire gepastheid*, p. 99ff.

⁷⁵ The birthplace (and surname) of Geertruyd van Oosten are widely discussed by Van Buuren, 'Geertruyd van Oosten and "Het daghet in den Oosten"', p. 78.

⁷⁶ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 1r.

⁷⁷ *Hoe men dat huysghesinne regeren sal*, Delft, [C. Snellaert or H. Eckert, between 23 Sept. 1493 and 1500] (CA 269). The vernacular translation of *De cura rei familiaris* provided city-dwelling elites in the Netherlands with a set of moral guidelines; the im-

an Erasmian-humanist preoccupation with educating the individual, and on the other hand, expressed the renewed attention for matters of ethical conduct. Such concerns were familiar to authors coming from the circles of both the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation. Indeed, regardless of confessional boundaries, high priority was given in the Low Countries to matters of upbringing and education. As historian S. Schama observed, early-modern Netherlandish culture exhibited a 'peculiar bias [...] towards children and their world'.⁷⁸ Such a tendency to assign positive or negative (but in any case moral) meanings to manifestations of childhood, both on its own terms and in their relation to adulthood, can be observed in works of literature, art, educational treatises and historical records of everyday culture from the sixteenth- and (most especially) seventeenth-century Netherlands.

One prominent humanist-Erasmian treatise that illustrated this tendency (and at the same time echoed the main educational premises of the Louvain *vita*), was Barthelemy Battus' *Dialogus van der Christelijcke huyshoudinge* (Peter van Tongheren: Antwerpen 1584). Battus' treatise had been written in a Protestant environment, which in fact goes to show how many of the assumptions underlying the educational process were shared across confessional boundaries. Battus specifically argued that the conduct and virtues of an adult were conditioned (in conformity, one might add, with classical educational theory) by the moral instruction (or lack thereof) that the individual had received as a child:

Als het kint noch ionck is, so suldijt verciere met eerlijcke manieren; want ist dat sy vander ionckheyt af inghedroncken hebben goede ende warachtige leeringen, die sullen in henlieden beclijuen tot inden ouderdom toe, maer zijn sy totten ouderdom gecomen sonder onderwysinge, dan en worden sy niet gheleert sonder grooten arbeyt, ende dicwils doetmen al verloren moyte [...] Daerom en isser gheenen beteren raet, dan die kinderkens van ioncx met goede onderwysinghe te instrueren.⁷⁹

When the child is still young, you will provide it with good manners, because whatever a child has imbued from a tender age regarding good and true moral lessons, it will retain until old age, whereas those who attain adulthood

fact of *De cura rei familiaris* on civic ethics during the later Middle Ages has been examined by Pleij, *Het gilde van de blauwe schuit*, pp. 159-160.

⁷⁸ On the subject of children, children's pastimes and childrearing in the culture of the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic see esp. Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, pp. 481-561. This quotation comes from p. 497.

⁷⁹ Battus, *Dialogus van der Christelijcke huyshoudinge*, fol. 19r. A copy of this treatise has been preserved at the University Library, Ghent, Ex. Acc.1200.

without an education, cannot be taught but with great effort, and very often this work proves to be ineffectual [...] Therefore one finds no better advice than to provide children from the very earliest age with good instruction.

Battus made it clear that the requirement to provide solid moral instruction took precedence over questions as to the parents' wealth or status. Parents were reminded that the ethical dimension of childrearing was vastly more important than providing for the child's material comforts:

[...] ten is gheen eer kinderen hebben, maer kinderen hebben die wel ende deuchdelijc gheleert zijn, dat is groote eere. Ende daerom sal een Godtvreesende vader meerder neersticheyt pynen te doen om die sielen zijnder kinderen te oeffenen, dan om haerlieder lichamen te spijsen oft te cleeden. Ende ist dat wy soo veel moeyten ende arbeyts doen om onse kinderen den cost te winnen, hoe veel te meer arbeyts zijn wy schuldich te doen, om die spijsen der sielen.⁸⁰

[...] it is not an honor to have children, but to have children who have been brought up virtuously is a great honor indeed. Therefore every God-fearing father ought to be much more industrious in exercising the souls of his children than in feeding or clothing their bodies. If indeed we must labor to provide food for our children, how much more effort should be spent on nourishing their souls.

These early-modern educational concerns resonated with the readers of the Louvain *vita*. By putting in place a model of virtuous Catholic parenting, its author (probably Sasbout Vosmeer), tapped into a reservoir of themes that were going to be increasingly more important as the Dutch entered their 'Golden Age', when indeed 'the nourishing of souls' through didactic literature and art became one of the mainsprings of inspiration to Netherlandish poets and painters alike.

It was not only childhood that was important. Just as significantly, the Louvain *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten offered an example of Catholic virtue for young people, perhaps most especially for young women entering adulthood. The second stage of Geertruyd's life started with her arrival in Delft, where she found employment as a servant-maid in private homes and taverns. The account emphasized Geertruyd's strong faith amid temptations that could lead a young girl astray, in a city that was described in terms suggesting moral decline:

In welcke stadt op die tijt, maer een kerc met een Gast-huys ende weynich Burghers waren, soo dat veel huysen leech stonden die niet bewoont worden

⁸⁰ Battus, *op. cit.*, fol. 19r.

maer op Sondagen ende heylige dagen vergaerden daer groote menichten
van menschen wt alle canten / meer ten Dans dan ter Kercken.⁸¹

In those times there was merely one church and an almshouse, and few inhabitants, owing to which many uninhabited houses stood empty, but on Sundays and holidays crowds of people came together from all places, more for the sake of dancing than to go to church.

This image of Delft presented the city as a place with only very few sites for practicing religion (the Church of St. Hippolyte and the chapel of the *Gasthuis*), and for this reason at least one modern historian has called this description an exaggerated one with regard to the actual situation in the mid-14th century.⁸² A similarly depressingly bleak view of Delft as a town whose inhabitants lacked religious zeal can be found in the vernacular chronicle of the New Church (*Nieuwe Kerk*) of St. Ursula.⁸³ A solution to a radical decline in the religious life of the city, described in that chronicle, was the founding of St. Ursula's Church in 1381; its authors even mentioned Geertruyd van Oosten as one of the devotees who supported the efforts to start building the New Church.⁸⁴ Here, in the Leuven *vita*, the intention seems to have been not only moralistic but, perhaps most of all, rhetorical – a lack of religious observance among the citizens of Delft provided, as it were, a dark background that contrasted with the vibrant colours of Geertruyd's exceptional Christian piety.

If the conditions for the moral well-being of the population, economic prosperity and the number of opportunities for engaging in religious life were all correlated factors, then the balance between them was upset. The scarcity of churches made for a low rate of church attendance and a high rate of irreligious behavior; a simultaneously-occurring decline in population suggested a developing economic crisis. Yet, notwithstanding these hardships, Geertruyd surmounted all obstacles and became a model of the Christian virtues proper to her station in life as a servant:

Hier diende Geertruyd troulijck met grooter eenuuldicheyt Godt in haer Meesters alle gehoorsaemheyt ende eer bewijsende / met een bly wesen / gesaediighen moet / ootmoedich harte / ende suyvere liefden tot Godt.⁸⁵

⁸¹ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 2r.

⁸² Bredero, 'De Delftse begijn Gertrui van Oosten', pp. 93-94.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Van Bleywijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 192.

⁸⁵ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 2r.

Geertruyd served God faithfully and with great simplicity by obediently serving her masters, by paying them respect with a glad countenance, a contented spirit, a humble heart and a pure love of God.

Geertruyd's actions served to exemplify the respect that those in a lower position (children, servants) were expected to pay to those in a higher one (parents, masters). The relation of children to their parents, stemming from the Biblical Fourth Commandment, was described in vernacular manuals on education. We can quote once more from Battus:

Alle iongers zijn schuldich haer ouders te eeren op twee manieren, te weten: wtwendich ende inwendich, wtwendich met soeten ende vriendelijcke woorden, met nyghen, met het hooft te ontdecken, ende de ander wtwendighe diensten ende eerbiedingen. Inwendich met henlieden wt den grondt des herten te beminnen ende groot te achten, dese twee eerbiedingen worden van alle iongers door die wet Godts vereyscht.⁸⁶

All children are expected to honor their parents in two ways, to wit: outwardly and inwardly; outwardly with sweet and friendly words, with kindness, by bowing, by uncovering their head and through other outward services and signs of respect. Inwardly by loving them and respecting them from the very core of one's heart; these are the two manners of giving honor [to parents] that the law of God requires from all children.

The moral imperative of paying respect to one's parents extended over the entire social hierarchy to include 'kings, mayors of cities, ecclesiastic persons, schoolteachers, guardians and masters with their wives, as well as all elderly persons'.⁸⁷

Literature written in the Netherlands exhibited a strongly parenetic character all throughout the 16th and 17th century. By way of poetic imagery and narrative situations this literature sought to instill in readers the moral requirement that every person should remain within his or her proper station in life. The seventeenth-century emblemist Jacob Cats, for instance, wrote (and showed) in one of his emblems that the individual 'who climbs higher than he should, falls eventually much lower than he'd bargained for' ('Die hooger klimt als hem betaemt, // Valt lager als hy heeft geraemt').⁸⁸ In the *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten, however, this

⁸⁶ Battus, *Dialogus van der Christelijcke huyshoudinge*, fol. 52r.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ 'Ut lapsu graviore ruant' in: Cats, *Spiegel van den Ouden ende Nieuwen-tijt*, pp. 230-231. That the Hollanders of the 'Golden Age' did not always comply with such precepts is adequately illustrated by such events as the Tulip Mania of the late 1630s; the

lesson was not expressed, as was the case with Cats, in terms of moral persuasion, nor as an appeal to reason or to forbearance alone. Instead, Geertruyd's actions as a servant who gladly remained within her station were narrated by the author of the *vita* as a life of renunciation and self-sacrifice that led to Christian sainthood.

Geertruyd was not only a perfect example of fulfilling the Fourth Commandment by obeying and respecting her employers, but her behavior also bore the mark of exceptional piety and humility. Humility was known in Christian moral practice as one of the virtues opposed to the seven capital sins (sometimes known as the seven deadly sins). The ethical framework of the seven capital sins together with the corresponding virtues (sometimes called the seven heavenly virtues), received its definite form from St. Gregory the Great in *Liber moralium in beatum Job*.⁸⁹ This framework was brought to the attention of Roman Catholics in the Netherlands in a range of vernacular catechisms. In the post-Tridentine period, the catechism (1618) of Ludovicus Makeblijde, a Jesuit based in Delft, listed pride, avarice, lust, envy, anger, gluttony and sloth ('Hooveerdicheydt, Ghiericheydt, Onkuyscheydt, Nijdt, Gramschap, Gulsicheyt, Traecheyt'). To counteract these vices, Makeblijde noted, Christians were advised to practice the seven virtues: humility, benevolence, chastity, kindness, patience, temperance and diligence ('Oodtmoedicheyt, Mildtheydt, Eerbaerheydt, Liefde, Verduldicheydt, Maticheyt, Neersticheyt').⁹⁰ By practicing the virtue of humility, as well as other heavenly virtues, Geertruyd provided a model of Christian behavior that the readers and listeners of the *vita*, men and women in all social positions, could recognize from numerous Catechisms and, consequently, imitate in their daily lives.

For a Catholic reader of the *vita* the concept of service took on a sacred dimension. The practice of the virtue of humility became a path along which an individual could advance towards holiness. In proportion to her station in life Geertruyd offered up to God her individual experiences, her toil and sorrow, willingly accepting all events in a spirit of love and obedience to God. This paradigm of Christian behavior did indeed bring forth spiritual fruit. As the author of the *vita* states, Geer-

dire effects of an immoderate quest for wealth and the misadventures of the 'social climbers' of the 17th century are described in vivid detail by Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, pp. 83-98.

⁸⁹ St. Gregory the Great, *Morals...*, p. 489. See Klauza, 'Grzechy główne' in: *EK*, vol. vi, p. 307.

⁹⁰ Makeblijde, *Den schat der christelike leeringhe...*, fol. 435-442.

truyd's heart was visited by God – a sign that the virtues she had undertaken to practice were indeed what God wished her to do:

[...] alle tgene haer ouer quam, tot vordering des Geest op nemende waer door geschiet is, dat Godt die Heere het hart van zijn Dienstmaecht besocht heeft met menichfuldige gratien ende sijne Godtlijcken troost.⁹¹

[...] *accepting everything that happened to her for the benefit of her spirit [=spiritual growth], so that it came to pass that God visited the heart of His handmaiden bringing her many graces and His divine consolation.*

The author of the *vita* was keen to accentuate the spiritual value of Geertruyd's humility both in the years before and after she had joined the beguinage. This willingness to serve God was the main reason for choosing to live as a beguine:

[...] met een yuer tot die duecht ende vyuerige liefden tot God / met vasten / bidden / diepe ootmoedichtheydt / ghewillighe armoede / versmaetheydt haer selfs / ende met niet achttinghe van alle tijtlijcke dinghen.⁹²

[...] *through an eagerness to practice virtue and with an ardent love of God, by fasting, prayer, deep humility, voluntary poverty, rejection of the self, and by a disregard of all earthly things.*

This path of spiritual growth became even more clearly defined after Geertruyd had received the stigmata. Geertruyd then strove to preserve these spiritual gifts and to safeguard her faith against the vice of pride, or specifically self-centeredness and vanity, by practicing the virtue of humility, the 'protector of all other virtues' ('alleen ootmoedicheyt, alle duechden bewaren moet, ende dat dese ghauen al te lichtelijcke door eygen behagen ende ydele glorie verdwijnen').⁹³

The life of Geertruyd was narrated as a special model of humility which could serve as an example to readers (or listeners) among the laity and to those leading a consecrated life. It was a universal Christian model of behavior which, backed up by the information provided in vernacular Catechisms, could be addressed to any audience, even though (in view of Geertruyd's identity as a beguine) the primary circle of readers is most likely to have comprised beguines and laywomen. To them, or to any other Catholic who happened to be reading this *vita*, the life of Geer-

⁹¹ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 2v.

⁹² *Op. cit.*, fol. 3v.

⁹³ *Op. cit.*, fol. 4v.

truyd offered an attractive and thoroughly modern model of a path to sainthood leading through the home, where spiritual and moral growth was conditional on carrying out ordinary household chores in a spirit of humility, charity and good will.

Another type of Christian mission that was presented through the figure of Geertruyd van Oosten as a model to readers was instructing and evangelizing their female peers. After Geertruyd entered the beguinage she continued to converse with the servant-maids whose life she knew so well. In these conversations she impressed on these laywomen the need to practice Christian virtues, encouraging them to place all their trust in God:

Oock vermaende sy een yghelijck tot die duecht, ⁺ ende sonderlinghe verweckte si de dienstmaechden tot een Godtlijck ende geestelijck leuen, ende wanneer dese haer vraechden waer af sy dan haer noodruft hebben soudent? Antwoorde sy, de goewille met die spille zijn ghenoech om God te dienen, ende lerende op Godt betrouwen, seyde sy. ⁺ Hadde ick alle den dach een buef gedient hy soude mijn de cost geuen. ⁹⁴	+ een yegelijck heeft god beuolen van sijn euen mensche. Eccl. 17. + bemerckt die vogelen des hemels d[i]e niet sayen of maeyen math.6.

[...] She called on everyone to be virtuous, ⁺ and most of all she instilled in maidservants a desire to lead a godly and spiritual life; when they asked her how they should provide for their daily necessities, she answered "good will and minding the spindle" [i.e. good will and doing one's proper tasks] is enough to serve God; do this by learning to put your trust in God'. She also said, ⁺ 'Even had I served a rogue all day, still he would have given me something to eat'.	+ And he gave to every one of them commandment concerning his neighbour Eccl. 17[: 12]. + Behold the birds of the air, for they neither sow, nor do they reap, Mt. 6 [: 26].

By her own example Geertruyd encouraged the Delft maidservants to seek the spiritual benefits of a life given over to serving God. These benefits, she argued, ought to outweigh the material rewards of service (or the lack thereof) in an underpaid menial job. Geertruyd's conversation with the maidservants provides us with a memorable example of a parenetic dialogue in which the addressees are being confronted with a distinctly Christian model of behavior. The maids reacted in a very natural way by expressing their anxiety as to how else they could earn their living. Yet Geertruyd's answer, far from inciting the maids to abandon their jobs, was to emphasize once again that one could indeed serve God by car-

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

rying out simple routine tasks in the household. As a next step, the servants were enjoined to offer up their duties foremost as a service to God with a pious trust in His providence. The positive attitude evoked here in the very homely terms of ‘good will and spinning’ (*‘de goe wille met die spille’*),⁹⁵ could have easily served as an accessible model of Christian life for the readers and listeners of the *vita*, perhaps most especially, at this point, for those working- or middle-class laywomen who remained in their station in life (i.e. who did not join a beguinage or a nunnery).

It was quite common in early-modern Dutch literature and art that moral concerns were expressed in relation to activities in the household, at home and around the hearth. This has been the subject of study, most notably in Simon Schama’s groundbreaking, if somewhat subjective, study of seventeenth-century Dutch culture, *The Embarrassment of Riches*.⁹⁶ Schama’s study of what he called the ‘moralization of the domestic’, however, tended to document this aspect of Dutch culture almost exclusively from the angle of didactic texts and pictorial sources created, for a vast part, in a Calvinist setting.⁹⁷ Indeed, it was specifically in Calvinist culture that Schama saw the most profound expression of that tendency to mingle the realms of household activities and moralizing, for as he stated, the Calvinists were ‘[...] more systematic in replacing a symbolic vocabulary that had been devised by and for a cultured elite, by one which in its use of commonplace references would be accessible to those with only the bare rudiments of literacy’.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Literally: ‘Good will and a spindle’; cf. *MNW* ‘Spille’. The *MNW* cites the following phrase as illustration: ‘Soo wat vrouwe gode dienen wille, hebbe ghenoecht an die goede wille ende an die spille’ (‘If a woman wants to serve God, it is enough that she has good will and a spindle’). The passage cited as an illustration in *MNW* comes from Hs. Leeuwarden, Prov. Bibl. nr. 282 (c. 1465), a manuscript containing fragments of the *Wereldkroniek*, a history of the world from the creation until 1348, written in Middle-Dutch by the Herald of Bavaria (Claes Heynenzoon, Heraut Beieren, c. 1450?-1414); Carasso-Kok, *Repertorium...*, pp. 219-220, and Van Oostrom, *Het woord van eer...*, pp. 126-178. That the Middle-Dutch saying ‘good will and a spindle’ appeared in a manuscript from the circles of count Albrecht’s court at The Hague points to its usage in the province of Holland roughly around the time when Geertruyd was living in Delft.

⁹⁶ Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, esp. pp. 375-429. Examples mentioned by Schama, whose narrative revolves mainly around texts coming from Protestant milieus, include the emblems in *Sinnepoppen* of Roemer Visscher (1614), Jacob Cats’ *Christelicke Self-Stryt* (‘Christian self-struggle’, 1620) or Jan Luyken’s *Het leerzaam huisraad* (‘Instructive household utensils’, 1711).

⁹⁷ The most notable exception is the Catholic genre painter Jan Steen; see Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, pp. 391-393.

⁹⁸ Schama, *op. cit.*, p. 382.

Schama's analysis of domestic concerns in the context of Calvinist culture makes it all the more interesting to see this paradigm of homeliness reflected at a very early date in the Catholic *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten. The Louvain booklet offers persuasive evidence that Catholics were encouraged to infuse the profane sphere of everyday household duties with the spirit of the sacred. Even a few decades before similar Calvinist domestic moralizing literature got underway in the northern Netherlands, audiences of lay and religious Catholic women were encouraged to assign a Christian moral meaning to their daily tasks. Through the lens of the exemplary life of Geertruyd van Oosten women could now view their arduous physical labor as an alternative path to sainthood that led through the household.

Calling on the servants to trust in God, Geertruyd not only tried to persuade them to act accordingly, but she also provided them with theological instruction on the subject of God's mercy. Yet if Geertruyd's words can be called – within the framework of the narrative – a *catechesis* for *her* circle of listeners, so the entire text of the Louvain *vita* can be understood as a similar *catechesis* for *its* sixteenth-century readers and listeners. Conversing with others in order to move them to a godly life (*evangelizare*), for instance, was linked in the *vita* to a passage in the Book of Ecclesiastes (17: 12-31) that spoke of the importance of conversion and repentance. Scriptural glosses such as this one provided a theological basis for the *catechesis*. In order to account for and justify Geertruyd's words and actions the author of the *vita* resorted to passages from the Old and New Testament. Such a strategy would have been by no means unfamiliar to Catholic readers, for Scriptural passages were a common instrument in the persuasive and polemical arsenal of Counter-Reformation writers. These polemicists derived their arguments from the *principium commune*, the Scriptural foundations of the faith shared by the Catholic Church and Protestant religions.⁹⁹ Here, however, on the level of the narrative, the Christian conversing with others on questions of faith and morality was not a theologian but a pious woman. Still, whenever Geertruyd's words or actions had to be explained to the reader, clarification was provided through additional Scriptural glosses inserted into the text by the author of the *vita*.

Geertruyd sought to persuade the maidservants to trust in God's goodness by responding that 'no master, were he ever so bad, would let a servant starve to death'. The reaction of the maids to these words was not shown in the *vita*. However, the sixteenth-century readers or listeners

⁹⁹ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, ii, pp. 749-753.

of *Het leuen...* would not have been left alone to deal with the beguine's rather puzzling answer. To understand Geertruyd's answer properly, the audience of the *vita* had to relate it to the providence of a good God who cared for His children. To help the audience make this inference the author of the *vita* inserted a marginal gloss referring to a passage from the Gospel of Matthew¹⁰⁰, where Christ called on the Apostles to seek first the kingdom of God, for then '[...] all these things [i.e. material necessities] shall be added unto you. Be not therefore solicitous for tomorrow; for the morrow will be solicitous for itself. Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof'.¹⁰¹ Scripture-based information about God's providence furnished the readers with a way of verifying the truth of Geertruyd's arguments and assisted them in the task of interpreting the situations described in the *exemplum*.

Properly understood, the *vita*, with its accessibly-offered Scriptural glosses, might have guided pious Catholic women in their efforts to evangelize their nearest social networks in harmony with Catholic doctrine. Female readers and listeners who modeled their behavior on that of Geertruyd in the conversation with the maidservants could have called on their peers (possibly young women of a similarly lower-class social background) to amend their lives according to Evangelical injunctions about placing trust in God's providence. Passages such as these made it clear to readers that Geertruyd's words were not only anchored in God's Word, but also signaled that the Delft beguine's actions represented a valid model of Christian conduct – effectively, *evangelizare pauperum* was open to everyone regardless of sex or rank. Of course, the proper hierarchy had to be preserved, for even Geertruyd van Oosten did not instruct an indiscriminate audience but her social equals. Yet even where women came from humble origins, they could be encouraged, taking up the example of Christian conduct offered in the *vita*, to speak with a voice of authority to other women on matters of religion and morality in ways that conformed to Church teaching. The well-spring of such activities would have to be doctrinally-sound knowledge of the teaching of the Church. To achieve all this, the presented role-models (e.g. model *vitae*) had to be validated through reliable *catechesis* in order to permit the individual to engage in authoritative Catholic religious instruction.

Catholic evangelization by women among women was a recognizable element in the society of the northern Netherlands after the Dutch Revolt. What we know of the behavior of laywomen and *klopjes* (single

¹⁰⁰ Mt 6: 26-32.

¹⁰¹ Mt 6: 33-34.

religious women, but also nuns and beguines whose cloisters had been disbanded) in the Dutch Republic approximates very closely the activities held up as a model to readers in the Louvain *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten.¹⁰² As a matter of fact, in the environment of pluriformity that prevailed post-1572 in the northern Netherlands, the situation portrayed in the *vita* must be seen as a resounding confirmation of the role played by women, such as the *klopjes*, in maintaining the cohesion of Catholic communities. In these communities Catholic laywomen had to shoulder a large proportion of tasks, such as the religious instruction of children and (in the transitional zone between the public and private sphere) of family, friends and neighbours.¹⁰³ If Sasbout Vosmeer seemed rather skeptical about the place of religious unmarried women ('spiritual virgins' – *geestelijke maagden*) in the parish, even complaining bitterly about them to his brother Tilman, his critique indirectly suggests that he was concerned to give these women an outlet for their energies by evangelizing networks of friends and family, which would prevent them from distracting priests (who were few in number) from their not unsubstantial duties.¹⁰⁴

Geertruyd laid aside her material worries when she entered the Delft beguinage. She did so after a particularly disturbing chapter that provided a model of Christian conduct for young women who might have had to contend with a similar situation:

Ter wijle sy nu met wonderlijcke vrolijcheyt in alle duechden ende gratien voortginc, ende so om haer duecht als om haer minlijcke bediensticheyt van een yeghelijck bemint worde, is ten laetsten van een Jonghelinck seer gesint aen den seluen verlooft, die bouen den trou haer gegeuen ende buyten haer consent een ander Vrouwe ten houlijck genomen heeft.¹⁰⁵

When she thus advanced with wonderful joy in all virtues and graces, loved by one and all as much for her virtues as for her amiable willingness to serve others, she became affectionately engaged to a certain youth, who however, breaking the engagement promise he had given, and entirely without her consent, took a different woman in marriage.

¹⁰² For examples of Dutch Catholic women instructing their family circles and peers in the faith or seeking to convert non-Catholics, see e.g. Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, pp. 316-317 and p. 322.

¹⁰³ See Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, esp. pp. 44-45 and pp. 142-143.

¹⁰⁴ Van Heussen, *Batavia Sacra*, vol. iii, p. 202. For other examples see Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, pp. 130-132.

¹⁰⁵ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 2v.

Soon afterwards the woman whom her fiancé had married underwent a difficult pregnancy and was 'unable to give birth to her child'. The pain did not cease until that woman '[...] had asked the worthy maiden Geertruyd to forgive her for the wrong that she had done and to pray for her'. Only through Geertruyd's intercession on her behalf was the woman able to give birth ('[...] si de waerdige maecht Geertruyt gebeden hadde dat sy het ongelijck haer gedaen vergheuen ende den Heere voor haer bidden wilde: Door wiens ghebedt sy dan verlost worde').¹⁰⁶

Geertruyd endured the disappointment of a failed engagement in the spirit of Christian virtues of forgiveness and forbearance. Her actions mirrored the information provided in post-Tridentine Dutch catechisms, where forgiveness and helping one's enemies were explained in terms of the virtue of Christian charity (*caritas*). The Delft-stationed Jesuit Ludovicus Makeblijde, for instance, wrote in *Schat der Christelike leeringhe*:

Hoe vertoont haer de Liefde tot Godt? [...] 4. Als wy onsen naesten met der herten ende dienst liefde bewijzen. [...] Wien verstaet men door onsen naesten? 1. Den H. Augustinus verstaet door onsen naesten alle menschen: niet alleen Christenen, maer oock Heydenen; niet alleen onse vrienden, maer oock vijanden. [...] Hoe vertoont haer de Liefde tot onsen naesten? [...] 2. Als men geerne vergheeft al dat tegen ons misdaen is. 3. Als men ghevoelt dat men ghereedt is oock de ghene die ons quaedt willen, ende aendoen, in hunnen noodt te helpen.¹⁰⁷

How is the love towards God expressed? [...] 4. If we love our neighbours with all our heart and with our deeds. [...] Who are our neighbours? 1. St. Augustine understands our neighbours to be all people: not only Christians but also heathen; not only our friends but also our enemies. [...] How is the love towards our neighbours expressed? [...] 2. If one willingly forgives all the injuries done to us. 3. If one feels willingness to help in times of need even those who intentionally inflict evil on us.

The act of forgiveness narrated in the *vita* had a very practical dimension. The woman who became involved in Geertruyd's personal tragedy underwent a complicated pregnancy. This might have appeared from the perspective of the readers of the *vita*, as an act of divine justice for that woman's complicity in breaking the engagement vows between Geertruyd and her fiancé. This, however, was not the point of the narrative. From

¹⁰⁶ *Op. cit.*, fol. 3r.

¹⁰⁷ Makeblijde, *Den schat der christelike leeringhe...*, pp. 205-206. Makeblijde provided also an *exemplum* on the value of Christian forgiveness 'Wat deught hem geschiedt, die sijne vijanden hunne misdaden vergheeft' (*ibid.*, pp. 201-202).

this trial that woman could only be rescued after she had expressed remorse and made a perfect act of contrition, while Geertruyd accepted to pray for the unnamed woman who had been the cause of her disappointment. Only after this plea for forgiveness did this woman undergo a miraculous act of healing in which a physical deliverance coincided with spiritual conversion. So while the Christian virtues of Geertruyd (forbearance and forgiveness, praying for one's enemies) were to be imitated, the contrite behavior of the other woman supplied the readers and listeners of the *vita* with a different but no less important example to be followed.

After these events Geertruyd set out on the next stage of her life. She had lost a worldly bridegroom but she now 'set her heart on the eternal and true Bridegroom, our Savior' ('[...] heeft haer hart gesedt op den eewigen ende getrouwen Bruygom onsen Salichmaker').¹⁰⁸ At that point she decided to enter the Delft *Bagijnhof*,¹⁰⁹ where, the author of the *vita* wrote, with great humility she offered herself up entirely to God. The exclusive choice to serve God was scripturally explained for the readers and listeners of the *vita* through a reference to the Gospel of St. Matthew ('men can geen twee heren gelijc dienen'): 'No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one, and love the other: or he will sustain the one, and despise the other. [You cannot serve God and mammon].'¹¹⁰ This quotation aligned itself with the previous passage cited from the same chapter of the Gospel of St. Matthew (see above, Mt 6: 26-32), and it was one out of an overall number of five quotations from this particular Book of Gospels in the margins of the *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten.

Entering the beguinage in Delft represented for Geertruyd the next phase in a spiritual evolution towards even greater humility and greater trust in God's providence. It was stressed, for instance, that Geertruyd always followed the advice of her confessor in her efforts to attain greater spiritual growth:

[...] haer seluen geheel Godt opofferende met innighe devotie / ende groote verichteydt arbeydende oock mede te wesen geheel ootmoedich soo wel in woorden ende wercken als in clederen / ende verduldich in alle moylich-

¹⁰⁸ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 3r.

¹⁰⁹ The exact word used in the *vita* is '*Bagijnhof*' (*ibid.*). This spelling is not the usual one, which would be *begijnhof*. The spelling found in the Leuven *vita*, *bagijnhof*, is used to this day as the name of the beguinage in Delft. This untypical spelling reinforces the hypothesis that the author of the Leuven *vita* was a person who lived or used to live in Delft.

¹¹⁰ Mt. 6: 24.

eden die haer opquamen / eenvuldich volgende den raet ende riegieringe van haer Biechtvaer.

Sy Biechten haer dickmaels niet alleen aen God maer oock den Priester haer Biechtvaeder⁺ / met groot berou leedtwesen ende veel tranen ende vast opnemende niet meer te sondigen ende ghelijck een ware wtuercoren Bruyt ondersocht sy scharpelijsk met wat manieren of middelen sy best haeren Bruydegom mochte behaghen...¹¹¹

[...] offering herself up entirely to God with an ardent devotion, and very assiduously laboring to achieve perfect humility both in words and in deeds as well as in the manner of her dress, patiently bearing all misfortunes that might occur; complying in all simplicity with the advice and guidance of her confessor. She confessed her sins frequently, not only to God but also to the priest who was her confessor, with great remorse, contrition and many tears, resolving steadfastly not to sin again, and like a veritable chosen Bride she sought attentively to find the ways or means that would best please her Bridegroom...

The Protestant churches that arose out of the Reformation upheld the private contrition of an individual before God (or, as the Dutch Reformed Church during the seventeenth century, revived an entirely public form of contrition before the community);¹¹² conversely, these churches rejected sacramental confession to a priest. An important point of Catholic *catechesis* in the post-Reformation Low Countries was, therefore, to explain anew the value and significance of sacramental confession or, in other words, to rebuild Catholic identity by restoring faith in this sacrament. The *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten responded to this aim by taking readers and listeners through the steps required to engage in pious confession.

The Louvain *vita* is strikingly similar to a catechetical manual for Catholics who would like to make a good confession. In this role its purpose would have been by no means limited, in principle, to religious persons (e.g. beguines or nuns) but it could be profitably applied by all Catholic readers, both secular and religious. Firstly, Geertruyd expressed remorse for her sins first individually to God, in the privacy of her heart, after which she said her sins to a priest in the holy Sacrament of Confession. This order of things was thoroughly in accordance with the practice of the post-Tridentine Catholic Church in the Netherlands. Any well-informed seventeenth-century reader of the *vita* would have been aware

¹¹¹ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 3r.

¹¹² See e.g. Roodenburg, *Onder censuur. De kerkelijke tucht in de gereformeerde gemeente van Amsterdam, 1578-1700*, pp. 124-131.

of contrition in this particular sequence from any number of vernacular catechisms and catechetical treatises, not to mention sermons or religious instruction. Evidence of this can be found in Ludovicus Makeblijde's *Schat der christelike leeringhe*:

In hoe veel manieren worden in Christi wet den sondaren hunne sonden vergheuen?

In twee. Ten eersten, door een waerachtich berouw, dat spruyt uyt de suyvere liefde Godts, ghevoeght met eene oprechte begheerte om die te biechten, als men met der daet daer toe gheene middelen en heeft. Ten tweeden, door de Biechte, ende het gebruyck der anderer Sacramenten. De eerste quijtscheldinge der sonden geschiedt door de opperste autoriteit Godts alleen: de tweede door commissie, die Christus gegheuen heeft aen de Priesters van sijne Kercke...¹¹³

In how many ways do sinners obtain forgiveness of their sins in the law of Christ?

In two ways. Firstly, through profound remorse which springs from the pure love of God, augmented by a sincere desire to confess these [sins], if one indeed does not have the means available to do so. Secondly, through confession and the use of the other Sacraments. The first manner in which sins can be remitted is by the authority of God alone; the second one through the commission that Christ gave to the priests of his church....

The author of the *vita* described Geertruyd explicitly as contrite and remorseful (the conditions for making a good confession), and afterwards as making resolutions for moral improvement which she then put into practice. Such a narrative description of confession, though limited in length, was very detailed, and touched, furthermore, on the most important points of this sacrament from the point of view of the penitent. In the structure of the narrative of Geertruyd's confession one finds information corresponding to the question-and-answer sequences of Netherlandish post-Tridentine catechetical treatises:

Wat moeten wy doen voor de Biechte, om wel te biechten?

Wy moeten het eerste der voorseyder wercken ghebruycken: dat is, waerachtich berou in ons verwecken. Waer toe wy moeten 1. Onse consciencie neerstelick onderzoeken, ende den armen staet onser sielen bekennen. 2. Oprechten haet ende leetwesen hebben van alle onse sonden. 3. Een vast opset maken van ons met Godts hulpe te beteren, ende niet meer te sondighen.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ Makeblijde, *Den schat der christelicke leeringhe...*, p. 110.

¹¹⁴ Makeblijde, *op. cit.*, p. 359.

*What must we do prior to confession in order to confess well?
We ought to apply the first of these works, that is, awaken in ourselves true remorse. To achieve this we ought to 1. Examine our conscience closely, and acknowledge the poor state of our souls. 2. Experience a sincere revulsion towards and contrition for all our sins. 3. Strongly resolve to improve ourselves with God's help and never to sin again.*

The depth of detail in passages on Geertruyd's confession does indeed suggest that this kind of information might have been used to catechize Catholic lay readers, beguines and persons leading a consecrated life. The description of confession in the *vita* of Geertruyd provided a narrative on which the readers could model their own confessional practice.

Geertruyd's meditative exercises and mystical experiences related to the life of Christ coincided with the cycle of the Catholic liturgical calendar. By emphasizing that Geertruyd's reverent devotion concerned the feast- and holidays, established by the Church throughout the liturgical year ('daer toe voechde sy haer nae den dienst vanden heyliche Kerc sulcx die tijt vereysten'),¹¹⁵ the author of the *vita* deliberately gave prominence to the beguine's faithfulness to the traditions and authority of the Church. The *vita* thereby set an example to a Netherlandish readership of acknowledging the spiritual value of a devotion aligned to the liturgical calendar.

The catechists of the early-modern Low Countries recognized the observance of the feast-days of the liturgical calendar as a centerpiece of Catholic religious identity. Catholics who authentically re-lived those sacred events could obtain vast spiritual benefits:

Het is een seer groote properheyt die onse heyliche Catholijcke Roomsche Kercke, die haer wonderlicken seere voor God, en voor ghelououghe Goddelicke Menschen is vercierende, tot wonderlick groot proffijt en zalicheyt der Zielen: dat sy gheheel het Jaer deure is hebbende die seer schoone Hoochtyden en Feestdaghen...¹¹⁶

It is a wonderful property of our holy Roman Catholic Church (so wonderfully attired for God and for godly faithful people, and mindful of the benefit and the salvation of souls), that she has, all throughout the year, a series of beautiful holidays and feast-days...

The catechetical manual cited here is Cornelius Columbanus Vrancx' *Schoon deuoot Kerck-Boecxken* (Ghent: Gaultier Manilius, 1607). Works

¹¹⁵ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 3v.

¹¹⁶ Vrancx, *Een schoon deuoot Kerck-Boecxken*, pp. 53-54. On the significance of individual holidays and their relation to one another see pp. 54-59.

such as the *Schoon deuoot Kerck-Boecxken* were intended, among other things, to foster a deeper intellectual awareness of the Roman Catholic religious tradition among non-Latinate audiences. For Vrancx, as well as for other authors of the Netherlandish Counter-Reformation, the regular and pious observance of religious holidays was not to be merely a sign of external conformity but, more profoundly, an internal quest for spiritual salvation within the Church which was the responsibility of every individual. After the reforms of the Synod of Trent, such treatises were instrumental in teaching the Catholics of the Netherlands to synchronize outward forms of experience (here, the observance of feast-days) with an intense inward piety.

In the theological, moral and social universe of the post-Reformation Netherlands the presence of feast- and holidays in the liturgical calendar was one of the most visible signs that set out the Catholic Church against the Dutch Reformed Church. In the Dutch Republic the civil government and religious authorities in fact felt obliged to eradicate all practices associated with Catholic feast-days (as well as remnants of pre-Christian Germanic folk customs).¹¹⁷ The liturgical calendar therefore provided authors with an opportunity to counteract this tendency, as much as possible, by sensitizing Netherlandish readers to the uniqueness and legitimacy of the Catholic tradition:

[...] die Catholijcke Kercke in dese duyster Weerelt gheheel Kerstenrijck deure seer schoon blinckt ende schijnt deur alle haer schoon Hooghtyden (die sy binnen den jare deen naer het andere seer vermakelick voor den Gheest) is hebbende, ende blydelick tot ghedinckenisse van alle weldaeden ons Zalichmakers, met groote danckbaerheyt zeer proffytelick onderhoudende ter Zielen zalicheyt, troost ende vermaeck, dat die Ketters niet en hebben.¹¹⁸

[...] the Catholic Church shines gloriously in this dark world throughout all Christendom by virtue of all her beautiful holidays (all of which, one after another, are very beneficial for the spiritual life); [these holidays], which the heretics do not have [emphasis – MP], are a glad remembrance of the virtuous deeds of our Savior, [a sign of] great thankfulness and very profitable for attaining the salvation, consolation and benefit of souls.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹¹⁸ The efforts of Calvinist consistories to eliminate from the public sphere the remnants of Catholic popular customs associated with feast-days (e.g. Christmas) are described by Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, see esp. pp. 130-131 and pp. 272-273.

Catechism-writers explained to their Netherlandish readership that religious feast- and holidays of the Catholic Church were visible signs reminding mankind, each year anew, of God's unfailing involvement in the salvation of the world. If the Catholic liturgical calendar could be presented as a manifestation of the truth of the Church's teaching, then it furnished authors with an effective instrument with which to defend Catholic doctrine and socio-religious identity against the arguments of non-Catholics.

Other evidence can be collected from the Louvain *vita* to show how its discourse could have had the *catechesis* of readers as its aim. This was done in two ways: by providing tangible evidence of Geertruyd's profound spiritual bond with God and by heightening the readers' awareness of signs of Catholic identity. In the Louvain *vita* the veracity and authenticity of Geertruyd's devotional practices was confirmed through miracles. Altogether the author of the *vita* made note of four miraculous events in the life of the Delft beguine. Two of these were related to the contemplation of the life of Christ around the most important Christian holidays, Christmas and Easter, and it is these that must be considered the most important.

The first of these miracles happened on Christmas Eve in the homely setting of the Nativity. When Geertruyd was contemplating the incarnation and birth of Christ – an infant under the care of the Virgin Mary – milk started issuing from the mystic's breasts. This miracle continued regularly each day until the feast of Candlemas.¹¹⁹ Perhaps because such an event might have distractingly drawn attention away from the realm of the sacred and onto the beguine's physical femininity, the author or compiler of the *vita* dedicated more space to the theological focus of Geertruyd's contemplation than to the outward nature of this fact. The discourse therefore emphasized the object of contemplation, most especially the actions of the Virgin Mary as a loving earthly mother providing nourishment for Her child. In this meditative introspection the serving role and motherly dignity of the Virgin Mary were given much consideration. In this manner, rather than being fixated on the outward marks of the miracle in the person of Geertruyd, the narrative invitingly opened the subject of the beguine's contemplation to an empathetic meditation in which the readers of the *vita* could join as well. As a matter of fact the miracle of Geertruyd's Nativity meditation brought together the major theological themes of the *vita*. Firstly, Geertruyd's experience was narrated in terms that spoke of the dignity of service in relation to

¹¹⁹ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 5r-5v.

God and other people. The other main theological theme of this narrative was the weight placed on trusting in God's mercy and providence. This theme too was given a prominent place in Geertruyd's contemplative experience by disclosing God's 'wonderful mercy' ('die wonderlijckheyt van den goedertieren God') when His Son was nourished by the Virgin Mary.¹²⁰

Just as the miracle of lactation was a sign of the Delft mystic's closeness to the Virgin Mary, so the next one, the reception of the stigmata, furnished visible proof of her spiritual nearness to Christ. This description of the most important miracle in the life of Geertruyd was combined with discrete theological instruction that could serve as the starting-point for the readers' own meditation on the central truth of the Christian faith, the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. An audience would have been able to imitate the saint not only in her actions (meditating before a crucifix on the eve of Good Friday, a scene shown on the title leaf of the *vita*) but also by following her train of thought. The object of her meditation concerned, essentially, the profound sense of Christ's sacrifice for the salvation of humankind. This was a matter of the greatest importance for all devout Christians – a fact emphasized through such recurring phrases as 'our Savior', 'our salvation', etc. This can explain why, even when describing this miraculous event, the compiler of the Louvain *vita* placed so much weight on how the reception of the stigmata by Geertruyd might contribute to a more perfect understanding and practice of the Catholic faith for every reader or listener:

Diesghelijckx inden nacht na den Witten donderdach, wanneer sy voor een beeldt van den ghecruysten Jhesus in haer ghebedt met onsprekelycke devotie ouergoten zijnde, die onbegrijpelycke liefden bedochte⁺ waer door die eenighe Soone Godts, voor ons zijn vyanden ende zijn schepsel, hem heeft willichlijcke begheuen tot den schandighen doot des cruycen, is sy met een vloet der godtlijcker gratien ouerschoncken ende beghaeft, also dat sy in vijf plaetsen van haer lichaem, met die vijf wonden van onsen Salichmaker, ende die zeghelen van onse verlossinghe is gheteyckent gheweest.⁺¹²¹

+ een sonderling mirakel der liefden.

+ ontfanct die vijff wonden. an[no]. 1340.

¹²⁰ *Op. cit.*, fol. 5v.

¹²¹ *Op. cit.*, fol. 3v.

[...] Likewise in the night after Holy Thursday, when filled + a unique miracle of with ineffable devotion she meditated+ before an image of love. the crucified Jesus on the incomprehensible love owing to which the only Son of God willingly suffered the shameful + receives the five death on the cross for us, his enemies and his creations, she wounds. an[no]. 1340. was gifted with a flood of divine grace and marked, in five places on her body, with the five wounds of our Savior, the seals of our salvation.+

The reception of the stigmata – similarly to the other miracles narrated in the Louvain *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten – reflected, as it were, the twofold meaning of Catholic identity in the early-modern Netherlands. In short, Catholic identity, as it was (re-)constructed through the medium of this *vita*, meant being attuned – both inwardly and outwardly – to the events of the liturgical calendar. This, in turn, implied that Catholic identity was synonymous with re-living in one's own life the lives of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary through the Sacraments, prayer and meditation.

In the context of a devout life such as Geertruyd's, which was infused with such meditations, miracles were the signs confirming God's truth. Miracles were indeed manifestations of God's special involvement in the lives of devout Christians. The Delft-stationed Flemish Jesuit Ludovicus Makeblijde defined a miracle as 'an event in nature that surpasses the power of nature' ('Mirakelen zijn wercken in de nature, boven de macht der nature'). Even though each miracle was different and unique, through Makeblijde's catechetical treatise Catholic readers were encouraged to look beyond the here-and-now to the underlying theological significance of miracles, which he described as the 'sure and undeniable signs' of God's will and as the 'divine seals of the truth' ('sekere ende onwederlicke teecken, ende [...] godlicke seghels der waerheydt').¹²²

The nature of miracles, moreover, was such that they could strengthen Catholic identity in the early-modern Netherlands. A point that was frequently raised in Catholic polemical literature concerned the presence (or absence) of miracles:

Dit teecken en kunnen de ketters oock gheensiens wederlegghen [...] Soo dan, nae dat Godt de macht der mirakelen sijner Kercke gelaten heeft, ende dat die alleen in de Roomsche Kercke ghevonden worden: volght klaerlick, dat de Roomsche Kercke alleen de waerachtighe Kercke Christi wesen kan. De ketters en kunnen gheene mirakelen doen, om dat Godt gheen ghetuyghe der valscheydt, die de ketters leeren, wesen en kan.¹²³

¹²² Makeblijde, *Den schat der christelike leeringhe...*, p. 39.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

This is a sign that the heretics cannot disprove. Therefore, since God granted the power of miracles to His Church, and these [miracles] happen only in the Roman [Catholic] Church, then obviously, only the Roman [Catholic] Church can be the true Church of Christ. The heretics cannot do miracles because God cannot be a witness to the falsehood that they teach.

Such a point was not explicitly made by the author of the Louvain *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten. It is not unimportant, however, for the hypothetical reception of the *vita* – or for the understanding of its catechetical function. Popular hagiographic literature of the kind represented by *Het leuen [...] van Geertruydt van Oosten* was a medium that conveyed poignant images of a godly Catholic life to a wide circle of readers and listeners. It is precisely this versatility that would have made it an effective tool for rebuilding the Catholic faith and identity, an important aspect of which was the theology of the miracle, among lay and religious Catholics in the Netherlands after the Reformation.

Where the *vita* of the venerable Geertruyd was most visibly aimed at strengthening the fundamentals of the Catholic faith, it concerned, before everything else, the devotion to Christ culminating with His death on the Cross and the Resurrection. After confessing her sins Geertruyd meditated deeply on Christ's Incarnation and His Passion – truths of the faith that are central to Catholic identity:

Oock soo oeffende sy haer in het leuen ende lijden ons liefs heren onsen Salichmaker.⁺ Verheffende ende grootmakende sijn liefden tot ons / ende verwonder- ende seer dat hi hem vernedert heeft mensch te worden om ons / wonende onder ons / in thart van de mensch die sijn geboden onderhout ende hem troulijcken di- ent. Bouen al verhoogde sy haer met grooter danck- baerheyt dat die almogende God haer verkosen hadde / tot sijn vriendinne ende sijn bruydt.⁺¹²⁴	+ daer u schat is daer is u hart. math. 6. + het eerst dat een mensche behoort te dencken is / waer toe dat hy van godt geschap- en is.

<i>Thereupon she applied herself to exercises in the life and Passion of our dear Lord Jesus Christ: + extolling and praising His love for us, and marveling greatly that He had humbled Himself to become a man for our sake, liv- ing among us, present in the hearts of those who keep His commandments and who serve Him faithfully. Above all she expressed great praise and thankfulness that the Al- mighty God had chosen her as his friend and as his bride.⁺</i>	+ where thy treasure is, there is thy heart also. Math. 6. + The first thing that a man ought to think about is to what end God has created him.

¹²⁴ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 3v.

The spiritual exercises in which Geertruyd intensely pondered the facts of life of Christ, prepared her for the reception of the stigmata. On the level of the *parenetic* function of this discourse such exercises, however, were not only a reminder of the fundamental Christian mysteries but, no less importantly, an injunction for readers and listeners to do the same in their own devotional practice, that is to say, to meditate on the Passion of Christ.

In the realities of monastic life in the late-medieval and early-modern Netherlands such a meditation would have been formed by Christocentric contemplative treatises. One of these was the highly popular *Vita Christi* of Ludolf von Sachsen, a book that, incidentally, was being read up to a century earlier by members of female religious communities in Delft (see above, **Chapter 1.2.**). By including such a contemplation in its narrative of Geertruyd's life the Louvain *vita* provided plausible evidence that after the Dutch Revolt such forms of meditation continued to be no less relevant to readers of religious literature. Moreover, one might argue that the author of the *vita* had the intention of reviving these meditations in order to propagate them among those readers and listeners who might have not been immediately familiar with such exercises. A detailed hagiographic narrative such as this one would have served that purpose very well.

An intense devotion to Christ during His Passion led Geertruyd to experience the *visio beatifica*, a mystical vision of nearness to God:

[...] Ende want sy haer dickmael becommende met het
lijden Christi ende danckbaerheit zijnder gauen is by
wijlen met soodanighe deuotie ouergoten / dat ses
weken aen een gheduyrende / sy die Godtlijcke visita-
tie in onsprekelijcke soeticheyt gesmaect heeft.⁺¹²⁵

[...] And because she frequently immersed herself in the
suffering of Christ, being thankful for His gifts, she was
sometimes suffused with such devotion that she experi-
enced this divine visitation in the form of an inexpress-
ible sweetness lasting six weeks without pause.

+ mijn vermaken is te wesen
met die kinderen der men-
schen / seyt die heer. Prou
8.

+ my delights were to be with
the children of men, says the
Lord. Prov. 8.

The discourse maintained a consistent focus on the wide horizon of religious life, never losing sight of the things that all Christians were to keep in mind. Where a Scriptural gloss (Proverbs 8: 31) explained to readers the theological sense of the mystic's *visio*, the discourse signaled

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

to the reader that it was not the mystical experience itself, however important it might be, that was the most relevant, but rather what this experience communicated to all Christians. It was implied, furthermore, that Christianity was not solely a thing of mystics; on the contrary, the quest for salvation ought to be the main mission in life of every Christian man or woman. Beforehand, the author of the *vita* had explained to readers that true Christians were those who ‘kept His commandments and who served Him faithfully’. It was in the hearts of those individuals that Christ would truly dwell.¹²⁶ By this the readers or listeners were reminded once again that their faith had to be vigorous and active. How this was to be implemented in practice can be gathered from how the actions of Geertruyd van Oosten were reconstructed and represented to the readership of the *vita*.

6.6. SINGING ON THE BRIDGES: THE RECEPTION OF THE LEUVEN *VITA* IN THE CONTEXT OF RELIGIOUS SONG CULTURE IN THE LATER-MEDIEVAL AND EARLY-MODERN NETHERLANDS

In his history of Delft, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft* (1667), the town’s chronicler Dirck van Bleyswijck wrote about the origins of the surname of Geertruyd van Oosten. According to Van Bleyswijck, who in turn cited the Catholic hagiologist Heribertus Rosweyds’ *Generale legende* (1649), Geertruyd was called ‘van Oosten’ because of

[...] een Geestelijck Liedeken ’t welck sy dagelijx pleegh te singen, waer in het Woordeken Oosten dickwils te pas quam.¹²⁷

[...] *a religious song that she* [i.e. Geertruyd] *sang every day, in which the word ‘Oosten’ frequently came up.*

This was just one of the many sources from which a seventeenth-century reader could learn that Geertruyd van Oosten owed her surname to a song that she might be been singing. The author of *Het leuen van die heylighe ende waerdighe maecht Geertruyd* (1589) wrote that Geertruyd was

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ Dirck van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 312.

[...] gheñaempt van Oosten, om dat sy geern ende dickmael een Liedeken sanc, waer af het beginsel is, Het daget inden Oosten...¹²⁸

[...] called 'van Oosten' because oftentimes she enjoyed singing a song that begins with the words 'Het dag[h]et inden Oosten'...

It is interesting to see that this observation was not made in the earliest printed source on the life of Geertruyd, the *Divisiechroniek* (1517) of Cornelis Aurelius. Yet the author or compiler of the Louvain *vita* was not the first to come to the conclusion that Geertruyd had been singing songs. He derived this information most probably from the work of the German hagiologist Laurentius Surius. In his life of Geertruyd in *De probatis Sanctorum historiis* (1570-1572), Surius provided the following etymology of the beguine's surname: 'Quòd autem ab Oesten cognominatur, id accidit ex carmine quodam, cui id nominis insertum erat'.¹²⁹ The exact title of the song that Geertruyd was said to have sung could not have been taken from this Latin *vita*, however, because Surius did not mention 'Het daghet inden Oosten' but merely one word, 'Oesten' or 'Oosten', which occurred in the song.

Why would anyone believe that Geertruyd van Oosten sang 'Het daghet inden Oosten', and not any other song that had the same word in its text? A plausible answer can be found by comparing the narrative of this song to events from the biography of Geertruyd narrated in the Leuven *vita*. 'Het daghet inden Oosten' ('It's dawning in the east') was a song from the collection entitled *Een schoon liedekens Boeck* (alternative title: *Antwerps Liedboek*; Antwerp: Jan Roelans, 1544). It told the story of a girl who decided to enter the monastery after her fiancé had been killed by his enemies:

Nv wil ic mi gaeu begeuen
In een cleyn cloosterkijn
Ende draghen swarte wijlen.
Ende worden een nonnekijn.
Ende draghen swarte wijlen.

Met haer claer stemme
Die misse dat si sanck
Met haer snee witten handen

¹²⁸ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 2r.

¹²⁹ Surius, Mosander, *De probatis Sanctorum*, p. 14.

dat si dat belleken clanck
Met haer snee witte handen.¹³⁰

*Now I want to enter // a small cloister // wear a black habit // and become
a nun // and wear a black habit.*

*In a clear voice // she sang the Mass, // With snow-white hands // she tolled
the bell // with snow-white hands.*

Did the author of the Leuven *vita* see in the events of this song an analogy to the biography of Geertruyd, and specifically, to the moment in Geertruyd's life when she decided to dedicate her life to Christ after her own fiancé had proved to be unfaithful?¹³¹ Although the analogy is imperfect, one can assume that it might have been attractive for early-modern readers to compare the bride who found her calling as a nun in 'Het daghet inden Oosten' to Geertruyd van Oosten – a bride who found her calling as a beguine. Of course, none of this would have been of any interest to an audience that had no knowledge of the song. A specific reference to 'Het daghet inden oosten' signaled that the readers were expected to have at least some familiarity with that song or with one of its variants. Otherwise, why else did its author allude to this particular title?

All this suggests that musical culture was an important part of the daily lives of the readers and writers of the *vita*. It was certainly important for the protagonist of the *vitae*, Geertruyd van Oosten, for their authors mentioned singing as an important activity in her life:

*Per id tempus duae ancillae, Lielta et Dieuuera, crebrò ad eam venientes, idem carmen cum illa concinebant in pontibus vrbis, vel alijs locis opportunis.*¹³²

This 'snapshot' image of Geertruyd as a young woman singing with her friends on the bridges of Delft was narrated by Laurentius Surius, but not, interestingly, by Sasbout Vosmeer in the Leuven *vita*. Other information, such as the names of Geertruyd's friends Lielta and Dievera, though not the reference to singing, coincided with the information found in Aurelius' *Divisiechroniek*. As we have seen previously, beginning with the Leuven *vita*, the Delft mystic became commonly associated with 'Het daghet inden Oosten' or its variants. *Acta Sanctorum* (1643), published by hagiographer and historian of the Church Johannes Bolland (Bollandus), also

¹³⁰ 'Een oudt liedeken' [no. 73] in: *Een schoon liedekens Boeck*, fol. 43r. For the most recent edition see *Het Antwerps Liedboek*, vol. i, pp. 169-171.

¹³¹ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 3r.

¹³² Surius, Mosander, *De probatis sanctorum*, p. 14.

referred to Geertruyd as the singer of this ballad. Again, the text echoed the information contained in Surius' *vita*:

Nomen verò, imò cognomen sibi contraxit à quondam carmine; vt propter Orientis nomen carmini insertum vocaretur Gheertrudis de Oriente, vel vulgariter magis, de Oosten: sed cantando ferebatur spiritu, referendo carmen ad dilectum suum Iesum Christum. Eodem tempore duae ancillae, quarum vna dicebatur Lielt, aldera Diever, frequenter veniebant ad praefatam Gheertrudim de Oosten, et frequentabant hoc canticum cum eadem in pontibus ciuitatis, vel aliis opportunis locis, benè canendo praedictum carmen.¹³³

This information was passed on to vernacular readers by the authors of the *Generale legende*, the Jesuits Petrus Ribadineira and Heribertus Rosweydus:

Dat sy [=Geertrui] van *Oosten* wort ghenoeft, komt door een liedeken, het welck sy daghelijckx pleegh te singhen, in het welck dat wordeken *Oosten* in stont: ende stierde het selfde altijdt tot haren beminden *Iesum Christum*.¹³⁴

She [=Geertruyd] was called 'van Oosten' owing to a song that she sang every day, in which the word 'Oosten' appeared; and she sang this song always to her beloved Jesus Christ.

The scene with three young women singing a religious song on the bridge was not omitted either:

Op den selven tijdt hebben Lielta ende Dievera haer [=Geertruyd] dickwijls komende besoecken, het selve met haer ghesonghen op de brugghen vander stadt, ende op andere bequame plaetsen...¹³⁵

Then Lielta and Dievera, who often came by to visit her [i.e. Geertruyd], sang the same [song] with her on the town's bridges and in other well-chosen places...

The problem of what exactly (if anything at all) Geertruyd had been singing has captivated researchers since the mid-19th century.¹³⁶ Their

¹³³ Bolland, *Acta Sanctorum*, p. 349, cited in: Van Buuren, 'Geertruyd van Oosten', p. 76.

¹³⁴ Ribadineira, Rosweydus, *Generale legende*, p. 131.

¹³⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

¹³⁶ For a concise bibliography of nineteenth- and twentieth-century publications on the subject of Geertruyd van Oosten and song culture, see Van Buuren, 'Gertruyd van Oosten and "Het daghet inden Oosten"', p. 285, n. 5.

fascination was shared by the Catholic novelist J.A. Alberdingk Thijm, one of the activists of the Catholic revival.¹³⁷ This debate took on a new dimension after the finding of the Leuven booklet by Father Mathias Goosens in the library of the Franciscan convent in Weert in 1942.¹³⁸ It then became clear that the author or compiler of the booklet not only referred to 'Het daghet inden Oosten', but also provided as the text of a second song that Geertruyd had supposedly sung. The latter was a simple meditation on the sacrifice of Christ and on His love for mankind:

Volcht een Liedeken welck
S. Geertruyd ghemaect ende
oock ghesongen heeft.

Jesus die is ghecomen /
dat heb ick wel vernomen/
aen zijne zoetichey /
het sal mijn siele vromen /
hy heeft my afgemen
alle ongestadicheyt.

Heer Jesus die is rijcke /
niemant is zijns gelijcke /
mijn raeckt niet watmen seyt /
want als wy bouen comen /
met hem wy sullen wonen /
in zijnder eewicheyt.

Jesu / door u vijf wonden /
vergeeft ons alle sonden /
verclaert oock ons gemoet /
dat wy v mogen kinnen /
en wter hart beminnen /
ghy zijt dat eewich goet.

Nu laet ons Gode louen
den Coninck van hier boven
daer alle mensch door leeft /
hy is dat eenich goet /

¹³⁷ A fictionalized Geertruyd van Oosten sings 'Het daghet inden Oosten' in J. A. Alberdingk Thijm, *Geertruide van Oosten. Geschiedenis van een Delftsch begijntjen uit de XVe eeuw*, Amsterdam, C.L. van Langenhuysen, 1853.

¹³⁸ Van Buuren, 'Gertruyd van Oosten', p. 76.

die wiste hoe wel hy doet /
die hem vercoren heeft.¹³⁹

Here follows a song that St. Geertruyd composed and sang:

Jesus has come [to me:] // That I have witnessed // By His sweetness // It will fortify my soul; // He unburdened me // Of all inconstancy.

The Lord Jesus is truly rich¹⁴⁰ // No one is his equal; // No matter what others say // For when we go to heaven // We'll remain with Him // For all eternity. Jesus, by Thy five wounds // Forgive us all our sins, // Enlighten our hearts // That we may come to know you // And love you in our hearts, // For Thou art eternal goodness.

Now let us praise God, // The King above, // By whom we all live; // The one who chose Him // Knew well what he did.

According to A.M.J. van Buuren who made a thorough study of the *vita*, there existed no conclusive evidence proving that any of the two songs had been actually sung by Geertruyd van Oosten. Van Buuren also expressed the view that Sasbout Vosmeer was ‘possibly also the author of the song “Jesus die is ghecomen”’, but without providing more arguments in support of this hypothesis.¹⁴¹

While Van Buuren seems to have been correct in his conclusion with regard to Geertruyd van Oosten and ‘Het daghet inden Oosten’, the frequent references to songs and singing in the *vitae* point to the prominent (and often underappreciated) place of such activities in the lives of Catholics in the Netherlands before and after the Dutch Revolt. Meanwhile, some new facts can be added to Van Buuren’s findings, which will situate the songs mentioned in the Leuven *vita* in the context of the religious literary networks of the late-medieval and early-modern Netherlands. Doing so, we will provide new perspectives on the reception of this part of the *vita* by its audience. In particular, we will try to determine what the readers and listeners of hagiographic literature would have made of the fact that Geertruyd sang (or was believed to sing) ‘Het daghet inden Oosten’ or a different song with the word ‘oosten’.

¹³⁹ *Het leuen van [...] Geertruyd van Oosten*, fol. 8r.

¹⁴⁰ This passage contains an echo of St. Paul’s Second Letter to the Corinthians: ‘For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich he became poor, for your sakes; that through his poverty you might be rich’ (2 Cor 8:9). This verse alludes to the voluntary poverty of those who renounced worldly life in order to enter into a closer spiritual relationship with Christ.

¹⁴¹ Van Buuren, ‘Geertruyd van Oosten’, p. 86.

It is quite unlikely that the readers of Surius, Bolland or Ribadineira and Rosweyde would have been at all surprised at the mention of a singing beguine (or of young laywomen singing on the bridge). Such sights were relatively common in the late-medieval and early-modern Netherlands.¹⁴² The many religious variants (*contrafacts*) on the melody of 'Het daghet inden Oosten' that appeared since the song became known in the Netherlands at the end of the 15th century, provide a clue to the settings in which such songs were sung. The singers were not only lay people, on the streets or at home, during their daily routines, but also the inhabitants of cloisters and church-goers. The earliest known religious *contrafact* of the melody of 'Het daghet inden Oosten' comes from the Utrecht manuscript of St. Agnes (*Sint Agneshandschrift*) dating from approximately 1480-1500.¹⁴³ The *Sint Agneshandschrift* has been tentatively identified as coming from the Utrecht cloister of St. Barbara which belonged to the canonesses regular of the chapter of Windesheim.¹⁴⁴ While more late-medieval examples can be mentioned, it is important to note that religious communities of singers ensured that such songs survived and were passed on from generation to generation over long periods of time. Singing in Catholic circles continued in the northern Netherlands after the Dutch Revolt. When between c. 1620 and 1630 Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele wrote a religious song for his parishioners in Delft about the life of Geertruyd van Oosten for his *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*, he set it to one of the melodies of 'Het daghet inden Oosten'.¹⁴⁵ The role of a singer of religious songs, ascribed to Geertruyd van Oosten in the *vitae*, would have therefore resonated with the pious laity and the religious (perhaps most especially women) in the Netherlands.

Although Van Buuren and most other researchers concentrated mainly on 'Het daghet inden Oosten',¹⁴⁶ the song explicitly mentioned in

¹⁴² A general perspective on song culture in the Netherlands, esp. during the 16th and 17th century, has been presented by Grijp, 'Zangcultuur', pp. 337-379 and more recently by Veldhorst, *Zingend door het leven*. For women and the song culture of the late-medieval and early-modern Netherlands see e.g. Gerritsen, 'Jan en Jenneken en de mondelinge overlevering van balladen', pp. 287-302 or Joldersma, 'Writing women and song into literary history', pp. 5-26; the role of singing in the beguinage has been analyzed by Hascher-Burger, 'Zang op het begijnhof', pp. 126-132.

¹⁴³ *Het Antwerps Liedboek*, vol. ii, p. 188.

¹⁴⁴ *Sint Agneshandschrift*, Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, ms. germ. 8o 190.

¹⁴⁵ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*, p. 48.

¹⁴⁶ Van Buuren, 'Geertruyd van Oosten', pp. 75-76, and pp. 284-285 are based on a study of 'Het daghet inden Oosten', no. 73 in the *Antwerps Liedboek*.

the Leuven *vita*, it is clear that other religious songs on a similar theme of dawn and daybreak, set to the same or other melodies, circulated in the religious literary networks of the Netherlands. One of the more interesting examples of a religious song containing the word 'oest' is 'Ic sie den dach int oest opgaen' ('I see the day rising in the east'), coming from a collection of religious songs entitled *Die gheestelicke melody tusschen Jhesum Christum ende die mynnende ziel* ('The spiritual melody between Jesus Christ and the loving soul', c. 1470).¹⁴⁷ *Die gheestelicke melody* was remarkable for being the only Middle Dutch songbook that contained a cycle of songs arranged according to a preconceived pattern, a meditation for each of the weekdays and two for Sunday. The owner *Die gheestelicke melody* (and possibly the author of the collection) was the further unidentified Etheken Berntsdochter.¹⁴⁸ Although most of the songs in the collection were made to existing melodies, it appears that the melody of 'Ic sie den dach int oest opgaen' did not match that of 'Het daghet inden oosten'.¹⁴⁹ According to A.M.J. van Buuren, *Die gheestelicke melody* was intended for private devotions in a monastic community, most probably related to a house of the Sisters of the Common Life.¹⁵⁰ The function of private literature in the communities of the Common Life was to bring about 'an integration of reading, meditation and sacralization of manual labor'; the inhabitants of such houses would typically intersperse intervals of silence while working with moments of singing or contemplate the texts of songs during individual meditations.¹⁵¹ This monastic lifestyle was presented to the viewer in a miniature adjoining the text of 'Ic

¹⁴⁷ Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Hs. Ltk. 2058. Portions of the text of *Die gheestelicke melody* have been preserved in other manuscripts, including ones at The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 75 H 42 and Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Ms. ser. nov. 12.875. For the relation of these manuscripts see Van Buuren, "'Soe wie dit lietdkyn sinct of leest'", pp. 234-238.

¹⁴⁸ For *Die gheestelicke melody* in general see Obbema, 'Het proza van "Die gheestelicke melody"', pp. 43-56 and 'Het einde van de Zuster van Gansoirde', pp. 166-175; a facsimile edition is available by Obbema, *Die gheestelicke melody. Ms. Leiden, University Library Ltk. 2058*. On *Die gheestelicke melody* in the context of female monastic writing see Mertens, 'Die gheestelicke melody: a programme for the spiritual life in a Middle Dutch song cycle', pp. 123-147. Introductory information on the collection and on this song is provided by Hogenelst, Van Oostrom, *Handgeschreven wereld*, p. 171.

¹⁴⁹ According to a query carried out on 2 February 2012, 'Ic sie den dach int oest opgaen' was not classified as a contrafact of 'Het daghet inden oosten' in the largest scholarly database of Dutch song texts and melodies, the catalogue *Nederlandse Liederenbank* of the Meertens Institute (www.liederenbank.nl).

¹⁵⁰ Van Buuren, "'Soe wie dit lietdkyn sinct of leest'", p. 241.

¹⁵¹ Van Buuren, *op. cit.*, p. 245 (translation mine – M.P.).

sie den dach int oest opgaen', which showed a nun singing this very song (its incipit is in a banderole coming out of the mouth of the singer).¹⁵²

6.7. CONCLUSIONS: THE SURVIVAL OF THE RELIGIOUS LITERATURE OF CATHOLICS IN HOLLAND

We can now combine this scattered information to obtain a more complete picture of the place of songs and song culture in the literary networks of the late-medieval and early-modern Netherlands with regard to those aspects that would have been familiar to the authors and readers of the *vitae* of Geertruyd van Oosten. Of course, none of this allows us to ascribe this song (or any other) to the 'historical' Geertruyd van Oosten; what this information presents us with, however, is conclusive evidence for the presence of a consistent culture of meditation through singing among female inhabitants of religious communities. Again, this kind of experience was different from the images of three young women singing on a bridge conveyed in the *vitae* of Surius, Bolland or Ribadineira and Rosweyde, but it would have been highly relevant to the reception of these *vitae*, especially where the audiences had some knowledge of life in such monastic communities. In the process of reception these audiences were most likely to have internalized Geertruyd van Oosten's daily existence by reading it through the prism of their own experience of a spiritual life of singing, meditation and labor.

There remains the question of 'Jesus die is ghecomen', the second song from the Leuven *vita*. Where Van Buuren tentatively assigned the authorship of this song to Sasbout Vosmeer, one can add that this song is likely to have *circulated* in Sasbout Vosmeer's circle but, like many vernacular songs, it had been created as the collective work of anonymous authors and singers, perhaps in a monastic setting (maybe even the Delft beguineage), over a space of several decades or more. Apart from that any attempt to date or identify the author of that song purely on the grounds of the 1589 Leuven edition is mere guesswork. The existence of this song, however, and the problems it continues to pose, is yet another indication of how little we still know about late-medieval religious lyric poetry

¹⁵² Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Hs. Ltk. 2058, fol. 36r. Reproduced in Hogenelst, Van Oostrom, *Handgeschreven wereld*, p. 171.

from Delft, about its makers and readers. For if 'Jesus die is ghecomen' is not the only vernacular devotional verse from the Delft network of the Vicar Apostolic, then it is one of merely a handful of poems from his circle. At the end of the collection of Delft *miracula* edited around 1600 by Sasbout Vosmeer's brother, Michael, is a meditative poem (or a stanza of a song), written down by the latter, about the Sorrows of the Virgin Mary and the Passion of Christ:

Om sonden altijt te mijden,
Overdenckt dijns scheppers lijden,
Daerbij sinen bitteren doot,
toordeel, strenght, der verdoemder noot,
tswerelts bedroch en valschen schijn,
des hemels vreucht, der hellen pijn.
Wildu met Maria ewelijck verblijden,
dagelijx gedenckt haer bitter medelijden.¹⁵³

To beware of sins // Always meditate on your Maker's suffering // On His painful death, // The severe Last Judgment, the peril of the damned // The deceptions of the world and its false appearance, // The joys of heaven, the pains of hell. // If you want to rejoice forever with the Virgin Mary, // Be sure to contemplate every day her painful compassion.

Here, the same kind of problem presents itself. Was this devotional verse authored by Michael Vosmeer, or did he merely take a note of a verse that he had heard or seen somewhere else? Was this poem (or part of a song) written in Delft, and if so, who were its singers, listeners or readers? By now these are all familiar questions. With regard to the verse 'Jesus die is ghecomen' such questions will have to remain for the time being without a conclusive answer, that is, at least until more manuscripts with late-medieval vernacular religious lyrics, especially those produced in Delft, have been identified and described.

Effectively, however, all these questions are about the exact nature of the continuity of literary life in Catholic circles before and after the Dutch Revolt, for of the fact that such continuity existed there can now be no doubt. The problem that will continue to confront researchers is how actual texts, often quite obscure ones, retained a high cultural, historical and, most importantly, religious value to their sixteenth-century readers despite the passage of time and the intervening change of literary paradigms. Again, there can be no doubt that both the song 'Jesus

¹⁵³ Utrecht, Rijksarchief, Archief Oud-Bisschoppelijke Clerezie, inv. nr 453, fol. 34v, cited in: Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 224.

die is ghecomen' and the verse 'Om sonden altijt te mijden' had *religious* significance to Sasbout and Michiel Vosmeer, the piously-minded authors of the respective compilations in which these two texts were placed. This conclusion does not enlighten us with regard to the dating, authorship or origins of these texts, but it does once again remind us of the fact that between c. 1580 and c. 1600 there existed in Delft a clandestine Catholic religious community in which such texts were passed down, read and re-read, probably aloud, very likely in prayer and meditation, and that this community was likely to have transmitted more than just these two specimens. While many such texts were lost, these two 'fragments' are among the very few survivors, even if not from the time of Geertruyd van Oosten (as Sasbout Vosmeer and the readers of the Leuven *vita* believed of 'Jesus die is ghecomen') then, rather more plausibly, from the period before the Dutch Revolt, when thriving monastic communities in Delft and elsewhere resounded with the song of women.

7. DISCOURSES OF IDENTITY. CATHOLIC LITERARY VOICES IN INTERACTION WITH THE IDENTITIES OF THE DUTCH GOLDEN AGE (1600-1650)

7.1. INTRODUCTION: THE DUTCH GOLDEN AGE

During the late 16th and early 17th century, a time that can be called the formative period of the Dutch Golden Age, the society of the Dutch Republic proved to be surprisingly stable and resilient. Despite much internal tension, largely due to religious and political factors, the Republic proved unsusceptible to armed civil conflict of the kind that might have easily overwhelmed even a less divided (or less pluralistic) society. Indeed, the seventeenth-century Dutch appeared to thrive amid the clamor of vastly opposing visions and ideas. Relentless differences of opinion, heated and at times feverish political and confessional debates, resounded in all strata of Netherlandish society throughout the 17th century. Such debates spoke of the religious and political engagement of all religious groups, Protestants and Catholics alike (even though the latter, encountering repression, were at a strong disadvantage in expressing their position publicly). The intellectual life of the Dutch Republic was greatly enriched by theologians, political theorists, polemicists and pamphleteers who sought to justify the claims of rival factions. It was amid such a struggle of competing identities that the Dutch of the Golden Age re-invented themselves as a people and as a society.

To describe the period of unprecedented Dutch economic and cultural expansion that occurred during the 17th century contemporaries and later historians have used the cultural term 'Golden Age' (*aurea aetas*). In Dutch historiography the concept of the seventeenth century as a remarkable age of Dutch culture gained widespread acceptance thanks to the work of such nineteenth-century historians as Conrad Busken Huet (*Het land van Rembrandt*, 'The Land of Rembrandt', 1882-1884) and P.L. Muller (*Onze Gouden Eeuw*, 'Our Golden Age', 1897), or later, during the

first half of the twentieth century, to Johan Huizinga in his *Dutch civilization in the seventeenth century* (1941). Especially Muller and Huizinga were the scholars who most unintentionally contributed to making the 'Golden Age' a synonym of the Dutch cultural expansion during the 17th century. Huizinga even ended his *Dutch civilization in the seventeenth century* with a trenchant critique of the notion that this period could be called a 'Golden Age': 'It savours of the *aurea aetas*, that mythological paradise that we already found a little tedious as schoolboys reading Ovid. If our glorious century must have a name, then let it refer to wood and steel, pitch and tar, paint and ink, audacity and piety, spirit and imagination'.¹ Yet despite Huizinga's rejection of this term, the 'Golden Age' continues to be universally applied to the Dutch seventeenth century, as attested by countless publications in the area of the humanities, including (but not restricted to) the social history, literature, culture and the visual arts.

The Dutch Golden Age is commonly situated roughly between two dates, 1572 and 1672, marking, respectively, the first victory of the *geuzen* in Holland and Zeeland, and the concerted attack on the Dutch Republic by England, France and their German allies that brought to an end the regime of Johan de Witt. This periodization is often used by historians of literature, although rival concepts exist as well.² Generally, however, the

¹ Cited after Otterspeer, *Reading Huizinga*, p. 154. In Dutch this passage reads: 'Het is de naam Gouden Eeuw zelf, die niet deugt. Hij smaakt naar die *aurea aetas*, dat mythologische Luilekkerland, dat ons bij Ovidius reeds als scholieren lichtelijk embêteerde. Als ons bloeitijd een naam moet hebben, laat het dan zijn naar hout en staal, pik en teer, verf en inkt, durf en vroomheid, geest en fantasie. Gouden eeuw zou beter passen bij de achttiende eeuw, toen het goud gemunt in de geldkisten lag'. Huizinga, *Nederland's beschaving in de 17^e eeuw*, p. 161.

² For an exemplary treatment of the Dutch Golden Age as a category of literary-historical discourse see e.g. Schenkeveld van der Dussen, *Dutch Literature in the Age of Rembrandt*, pp. 1-5. In the vision of most Dutch historians of literature, the Renaissance, lasting from 1550 till 1669 (see e.g. Meijer Drees et al., *Nederlandse literatuur, een studiehandleiding*, pp. 16-24), overlaps with the period described as the Golden Age. A slightly different periodization is the one proposed by the historian J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, in which the Dutch Golden Age is subdivided in an Early (1588-1647) and Later (1647-1702) period. The cultural topos of a Golden Age (*aurea aetas*) is specifically analyzed by A. Borowski in the context of the notion of a cultural concept of 'return' or 'rebirth' inherent to the thought of the Renaissance and propagated, among others, by Erasmus (*Pojęcie i problem „renesansu północnego"*, pp. 16-17ff). Reflections on the historical period of the seventeenth century as a Golden Age by the Dutch writers of that time and by later historians are analyzed by Frijhoff and Spies, *Bevochten Eendracht*, esp. pp. 63-69. The evolution of the term 'Golden Age' is traced in the area of Dutch discourses of cultural history e.g. by Van der Lem, *Het eeuwige verbeeld in een*

years around 1650 are regarded as marking the peak of Dutch expansion both in the area of the arts and culture, and with regard to economic or commercial developments.³

The early-to-mid 17th century was a period of measured expansion and relative stability for the community of Catholics living in the northern provinces. While Catholics collectively had to contend with repression by the authorities, the scale of this repression was not sufficient to thwart the rebirth of Catholic communities and, consequently, of Catholic literary life in the Dutch Republic. For the literary networks in Delft the first decades of the 17th century were a period of consolidation, with the arrival in Delft of a noted Catholic writer and intellectual, the Jesuit theologian Ludovicus Makeblijde. However, it was the coming of the priest Johannes Stalpart van der Wiele, a native of The Hague, to Delft in 1614 that instilled new life into the town's Catholic literary microcosm. Stalpart van der Wiele, a Rome-trained jurist, injected a powerful dose of Renaissance erudition and Counter-Reformation zeal into Delft's Catholic literature. In polemical writings Stalpart van der Wiele provided orthodox Catholics with an apologetical weapon which they could use to fend themselves in a field dominated by the discourse of Dutch Calvinism.

The creation of political statehood in the northern provinces after 1572 was in many respects a parallel process to the ongoing Protestantization of Dutch society (*see above*, **Chapter 5.1.-5.2.**). A natural component of both these processes was the formation of identities that expressed the new self-image of the non-Catholic Dutch. Below we will look at how some of the discourses of new Dutch identity produced new effects in the self-definition (and self-representation) of Catholics in the Dutch Republic. First, we will re-examine the new identities that included symbolic concepts such as the idealized notion of the northern Netherlands as a new 'promised land' of economic affluence (**Chapter 7.2.**) and religious freedom, by which the Protestant Dutch defined themselves as a new 'chosen people' (**Chapter 7.3.**). Because some of these discourses excluded Catholics as their participants, we will therefore assess how Catholics actively took steps, in their cultural and literary discourses, to subvert or revise these new symbolic identities. By this we hope to shed more light on some of the intellectual-cultural contexts that determined

afgehaald bed: Huizinga *en de Nederlandse beschaving* (for the evolution of this concept at the hands of Huizinga's predecessors see pp. 17-28) and by Aerts, 'De burgerlijkheid van de Gouden Eeuw', pp. 5-22.

³ Esp. by Frijhoff and Spies, *Bevochten eendracht*, *ibid.*

the world of Catholic writers and readers of literature in the Netherlands and Delft during the Golden Age. In the following chapters of this book (**Chapter 9.1-9.4**) we will look into the literary networks of Delft's most prominent seventeenth-century Catholic authors – Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele and Ludovicus Makeblijde. Finally, we will see how Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele and others from his circle revived the Christianized concept of the 'Golden Age' as a blueprint for rebuilding Catholic identity (**Chapter 9.5**).

7.2. NAVIGATING THE MORAL MACROCOSM: GLOBAL TRADE AS AN IDENTITY OF THE DUTCH GOLDEN AGE

In 1642, at the height of the Dutch Golden Age – and only six years before the signing of the Treaty of Münster that ended the Eighty Years War – Jan van der Veen (1578-1659), a popular Calvinist writer of emblems and moralizing literature, published the sonnet 't Vrye Nederlandt' ('The free Netherlands'). In this sonnet, which was by no means special but rather quite representative of Dutch moralizing literature, Van der Veen assembled a mosaic of cultural images, stereotypes and *clichés* into a portrait of the social, political and religious identity of the Dutch Republic:

't Vrye Neder-landt

Een cleyn beloofde-Landt bewalt met water-vesten,	Esech. 47:10.
Daarme uyt de Pekel mynt het Goudt in overvloedt,	Luc. 5:2.
En 't Silver uyt een cruyt dat Vee en Menschen voedt,	Gen. 18:8.
Wiens Hav'nen strecken sich van 't Oosten totten Westen,	Deut. 32: 14.
Bereykende met roem het vreemde der gewesten,	Exod. 3:8.
Alwaar het den Maraan het herte beven doet,	Ps. 72: 8.
En swellen als een Pad van spijt en giftich bloedt,	
Daer van, waer 't mooglyk sou hy barsten noch ten lesten,	Heb. 13:8.
Een vrye wooning voor het tedere gewiss'	
Daar jeder int gevoel mach blijven dien hy is.	Mat. 5: 15.
En ongequetst int licht het selve mach beleeven,	Pro. 10: 22.
Dies zegent het de Heer, soo datter groeyt en bloeyt,	Prov. 30: 33.
En vande Melk en Kaes' - en boter over-vloeyt,	Sam. 17: 17.
Alleen, het waer na wensch, waar 't maar de vree gegeven.	Rom. 14: 19 ⁴

⁴ Van der Veen, *Zinne-beelden oft Adams Appel*, p. 9.

A small Promised Land walled all around by watery ramparts, // Where abundant gold is mined in the watery brine, // And silver issues forth from a plant that feeds man and cattle, // Whose harbors extend from East to West, // While its fame in the most far-off regions dwells, // Causing the Marrano's heart tremble fearfully // And to swell up like a toad's with envy and bad blood // That he'd explode at last, one might imagine. // A free abode for the tender conscience // Where everyone may remain true to one's self // And untroubled may profess this publicly, // Therefore, the Lord has blessed this land that it flourishes, // Brimming over with milk, cheese and butter, // Yet if only this country had the peace that we all desire!

Van der Veen's sonnet opens up to reveal, next to a line of Scriptural references, the two realms that were of the utmost interest to the seventeenth-century Dutch. These realms were, respectively, the outside world of global trade, commerce and warfare, and an inner world of the values upon which the Dutch society of the post-Revolt years was built. Where the first verses of Van der Veen's sonnet, therefore, evoke the worldwide 'macrocosm' of the Dutch, the ending turns the focus inward upon the Dutch 'microcosm' – a positive self-image of a secure, confident, free and, most especially, tolerant society.

In the historical reality of the Dutch Golden Age these two domains, the 'microcosm' of a local society and the 'macrocosm' of the world at large, were just as interrelated as they are in Van der Veen's sonnet. It was so for all religious groups living in the Dutch Republic, for Protestants as well as for Catholics. The Catholics inhabited a world where economic dealings sometimes created a problematic moral terrain. Questions on defining the moral attitude of the individual, whether it was towards new political-economic realities or towards the new Dutch discourses of self-definition, had to be resolved by Catholics in the light of the teaching of the Church. Below we will see how Dutch Catholics in general, and specifically Catholics from Delft, approached these problems in their writings.

Since the 1590s Dutch international commerce reaped new benefits from a series of military campaigns by Maurice of Nassau (during the period described by Fruin as the decisive 'Ten Years' of the Dutch Revolt – *see above*, introduction to **Chapter 6**). The military victories of Maurice of Nassau created fairly stable frontiers to the south and east of Holland, and reopened lines of communication along the major rivers. Almost immediately trading networks were re-established by Protestant refugee merchants from the Southern Netherlands who immigrated to the Republic, especially to Amsterdam. When after 1590 Philip II briefly lifted the embargo on Dutch trade with Spain and Portugal (till 1598), the Am-

sterdam merchants were ready to make use of this opportunity, especially as during this time the Dutch had maintained their blockade of southern trading cities such as Antwerp. Spurred by demand in northern Europe, the commercial towns of the Netherlands, led by Amsterdam, started serving as an *entrepôt*, a staple market (*stapelmarkt*) for goods imported from the Mediterranean. Other valuable products, such as spices, sugar, silk, dyes, wine and precious metals, started coming in, through Portugal and Spain, from the Far East and the Americas. Apart from these 'rich trades' there was the 'mother trade' (*moedernegotie* or *moedercommercie*), the bulk commodity traffic in raw materials and foodstuffs (esp. timber and wheat) supplied by the Baltic Sea area. The Dutch fishery trade provided a constant source of staple foodstuffs throughout the early-modern period, especially in the form of herring.⁵ All this would not have been possible without an appropriate infrastructure. As the historian Michael North shrewdly observed, 'Herring fishing, processing and selling was supervised by the Board of Directors of the Main Fishery, *College van Commissarissen van de Groote Visscherij*, which acted like a cartel, it established quotas and the market price; its sole purpose was to dominate the European market'.⁶ The other staple foodstuff was grain. The people of the Netherlands were supplied with wheat imported from the Baltic Sea region, and most especially from the vast agricultural areas of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania; wheat and other raw agricultural products were ferried (since c. 1595) in efficient bulk-carrying vessels known as *fluitschepen*.⁷ The 'free Netherlands' appeared therefore, to the seventeenth-century Dutch, as a country that, though small in size, was blessed by God's Providence to find an abundant source of food and revenue in its fisheries ('gold') and in its grain imports and agricultural produce ('silver'). That Holland abounded in riches imported from elsewhere was a sentiment echoed by Jacob Cats in his poem 'Op Suyker en Kruyt' ('Of sugar and spices'). Cats described Holland, consequently, as a *locus amoenus*, a pleasure-garden, and as a new terrestrial Paradise. Finally, in a subtle warning against man's abuse of this affluence, Cats suggested that Holland risked turning into a new Land of Cocaygne (*Lu-*

⁵ The Dutch developed the technique of 'gibbing' herring (*haringkaken*) and preserving it in salt. By reducing spoilage this technique allowed herring to be exported or used as a barter product. The innovative Dutch herring buss (*haringbuis*) had a longer range than any other comparable European fishing boat. Cf. Unger, 'Dutch Herring, Technology and International Trade in the Seventeenth Century', pp. 253-280.

⁶ North, *Art and Commerce in the Dutch Golden Age*, p. 26.

⁷ Van Tielhof, 'Een open economie, in voor- en tegenspoed', pp. 136-139.

ilekkerland), a place of effortless affluence catering to lazy (and perhaps undeserving) consumers:

Al wat men Hollandt noemt en zijn maar weynig Steden,
 En Hollants vrienden selfs en zijn maar weynig leden,
 En al van kleyn begriip: maer des al niet-te-min
 Daer schuylen over-al verscheyde wonders in.
 Soo wie maer eens betreet den ring van onse Kusten,
 Die vindt een schoon Prieel, vol alderhande lusten:
 Al wat den hemel sendt, of uyt der aarde groeyt,
 Dat komt ons met de Zee ter haven in-gevloeyt;
 Godt is gelijck een Son, die duysent gulde stralen,
 Laet op ons kleynen Thuyn geduurig neder-dalen;
 Wat oyt aan boomen hing, of op den velde stont,
 Dat komt hier aan het volck gevallen in den mont.⁸

What we call Holland comprises but a few cities; // And Holland's friends are but few in number // and not very powerful: but nonetheless // Great wonders we can find there: // Whoever enters the ring of our coastline // Will find a fair garden rich in all kinds of pleasures: // Whatever the heavens send, or what grows out of the earth, // Comes to us by sea, enters our harbors; // God is like the sun that lets a thousand golden rays // Descend constantly upon our small garden; // Whatever grows on trees or in the fields // Comes falling into the mouths of the people here.

The wealth generated by the 'rich trades' with the East and West Indies and by the *moedernegotie* of the Baltic was one of the main reasons for the expansion of Holland's merchant elites whose representatives became a leading force in the politics of the Republic. During the first three decades of the 17th century these commercial activities rapidly increased in scope and significance. In 1595 the first fleet of ships was assembled for direct trade with the East Indies, by-passing Spain and the Mediterranean; in 1602 the Dutch East India Company (*Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, or VOC) was chartered in Amsterdam, to be followed several years later, in 1606, by the West India Company. The opening of direct lines of communication with the Far East greatly reduced the overhead costs of acquiring the most valuable products. As a result these products, passing through Amsterdam's increasingly globalized staple market, could be sold at competitive prices to other merchants from countries along the North Sea and the Baltic.⁹

⁸ Cats, *Alle de wercken van den Heere Jacob Cats*, vol. ii, p. 385.

⁹ Owing to restrictions of a practical nature only a fragmentary bibliography of the relevant literature regarding the mechanisms of Dutch global trade can be presented

The Dutch trade was endangered first by Spanish (in the Mediterranean) and later by English competition. When Van der Veen wrote this sonnet the political alliances of the Dutch were already beginning to change from an anti-Habsburg position to one dedicated to opposing the English and (to a lesser extent) the French. A radically anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic outlook, however, persisted as the legacy of militant Dutch Calvinism. Interestingly, Van der Veen designated the 'Spanish' by the word *Maraan*, a term derived from *Marrano*.¹⁰ A good reason for the seething envy ascribed to the Spanish was the decades-old Dutch policy of undercutting the Spanish trading networks in the East and West Indies. At the same time the caricatured, de-humanized portrayal of the Spanish, reproduced by Van der Veen, was very much a consequence of Dutch propaganda dedicated to spreading the so-called 'Black Legend' of sometimes invented and almost always strongly magnified Spanish atrocities.¹¹

The commercial activities of the ocean-going Companies profoundly shaped the character of the Delft economy. A long-distance trading company (*compagnie van verre*) was set up in Delft by a group of eleven shareholders in 1601.¹² When the East India Company was chartered in

here. General overviews can be found in Prak, *The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century*, pp. 111-121; Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, esp. pp. 307-327. A classic publication is Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire 1600-1800*; for a more recent monograph with a broad international scope see Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740*. A specifically Holland angle on Dutch trade is presented by Van Tielhof, 'Een open economie, in voor- en tegenspoed', pp. 135-180. An attempt to situate Dutch culture in the context of commercial contacts in the North Sea area has been made by Heerma van Voss, 'Noordzeecultuur (1500-1800)', pp. 25-55. For trade with the countries of Central Europe and the Baltic seaboard (esp. the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania, and the Polish dominion of Prussia), see e.g. Blockmans, 'Der Holländische Durchbruch in der Ostsee', pp. 49-58; Heeres et al., *From Dunkirk to Danzig. Shipping and Trade in the North Sea and the Baltic, 1350-1850* and Van Winter et al., *The Interactions of Amsterdam and Antwerp with the Baltic region 1400-1800*. Since the 1970s topics such as trade and the economy have found an appropriate place in studies of seventeenth-century Dutch culture, literature and art, e.g. Price, *Culture and Society in the Dutch Republic During the 17th Century* or North, *Art and Commerce in the Dutch Golden Age*.

¹⁰ The Marranos were Sephardic Jews living in the Iberian Peninsula who had converted to Catholicism in the 14th and 15th century (the *conversos*). Some Marranos continued to secretly practice the Jewish religion. In seventeenth-century Dutch the term 'Marraan' denoted, variously, a Jewish convert to Catholicism or a Mauretanian (North African); in most common usage it connoted, in a derogatory sense, the Spanish (WNT 'Marraan').

¹¹ For the circulation of falsified history in the anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish 'Black Legend' in the seventeenth-century Netherlands see Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, pp. 83-93.

¹² Eekhout, 'De Delftse kamer van de V.O.C.', p. 90.

1602, Delft was one of the towns whose delegate was appointed to its board of directors (known, after its seventeen members, as the *Heren XVII*).¹³ In the first year of its existence, the Delft chamber dispatched a single ship, the 'Eendracht', to the Orient.¹⁴ Three years later a fleet of thirteen ships set sail under the command of the Delft-born admiral Cornelis Matelief de Jonge of Rotterdam.¹⁵ In the same year the Company established its reputation by scattering the Portuguese fleet off the coast of the Indonesian 'Spice Islands'.¹⁶ If the East-India Company sporadically engaged in piracy, then privateering was most certainly part of the political mandate of the West-India Company (*West-Indische Compagnie*), one of whose nineteen representatives (the *Heren XIX*) was appointed from Delft (within the so-called 'Chamber of the Maas' – *Kamer van de Maze*).¹⁷ The Company's charter, drafted in 1621, defined its commercial interests as encompassing the Atlantic seaboard of the Americas, Africa, and the Carribean. The West-India Company, although eventually unable to achieve the sustainable returns of the East-India Company, owed its good fortune to admiral Piet Hein, a native of Delfshaven, who led the Dutch W.I.C. fleet to victory over the famed Spanish 'Silver Fleet' in the Bay of Matanzas off the coast of Cuba. These deeds were extolled by the Delft Calvinist *predikant* Dionysius Sprankhuysen.¹⁸ Hein himself entered the pantheon of the heroes of the Dutch Golden Age after his death in 1629, his body being laid to rest in a splendid classicist tomb in the Old Church in Delft.¹⁹

The offices of the Delft chamber of the V.O.C. were located since 1631 in a complex of several houses near the Schiedamse Poort, the *Oost-Indisch Huis*. A series of warehouses (the *Oost-Indisch Pakhuis*) gradually rose up on the opposite side of the Oude Delft. More warehouses and a shipyard were built in Delfshaven. Stored in the *Oost-Indisch Huis* were the treasures of the fabled Orient:

[...] allerhande Speceryen / als Peper / Note-muscaten / Foelie / Geroffel-nagelen / Caneel en dergelijcke Indiaensch gewas / oock veelderley Catoene Ly-waten / Zyde en Zyde-stoffen / Sappen / Gommen / Verwen / Chinese

¹³ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 321-322.

¹⁴ Wijbenga, *Delft*, p. 119.

¹⁵ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 790.

¹⁶ Van Bleyswijck, *op. cit.*, p. 614.

¹⁷ Van Opstall, 'De Kamer van de Maze tot Delft', pp. 94-95.

¹⁸ Wijbenga, *Delft*, pp. 129-134.

¹⁹ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, pp. 178-180; p. 618.

Porceleynen / Verlackte-wercken / en andere overzeesche Huys-raet uyt het andere eynde des Weerelts / die hier jaerlijckx in en uyt dit Huys als in een Schuyre daer het als met een gestadige vloet en ebbe komt en wegh-gaet / en over al / soo door't gansche Land als na andere plaetsen / vertiert en versonden wert.²⁰

[...] all kinds of spices such as pepper, nutmeg, mace, cloves, cinnamon or other Indian plant products; furthermore, bales of cotton, silk and silk material, syrups, gums, pigments, Chinese porcelain, lacquer-ware and other exotic household utensils from the other side of the globe; all these things, fluctuating as if under ebb and flood, arrive and issue forth from this house to be delivered throughout the entire country as well as to places abroad.

The activities of the Delft chambers of the West and East India Companies stimulated commerce, shipping and shipbuilding. In the first two decades of the 17th century the Delft chamber of the V.O.C. sent out a new or refurbished ship to the East Indies on average once every two years, but even more ships were built as the century progressed. Given that the voyages lasted one to two years, the general rule seems to have been that no new ship could be dispatched before the previous one had returned. Among the crew members recruited for the voyages were mainly male orphans who had been brought up in the Delft orphanage (*Wees-huis*), an institution under the care of the members of the Delft board of the V.O.C. It is estimated that several hundred jobs in Delft and Delfshaven were sustained by demand from the V.O.C. This was mainly the case with subsidiary industries in the shipbuilding trade, such as rope- and sail-making, the tar trade, anchor-making, metalworking, the delivery and sale of armaments, provisioning, transportation of products by boat along inland routes, etc.²¹

Another lasting effect that the Delft chamber of the V.O.C. had on the economy of Delft was through the importation of Chinese porcelain. One of the first porcelain auctions in the northern Netherlands was held in 1615 in Delft.²² The local earthenware-makers tried to imitate blue chinaware; around 1630 the term *Delffsch porceleijn* was already in circulation for a majolica product which, although not technically porcelain, was essentially a popular local interpretation of the forms and designs of oriental china.²³ The earthenware industry provided a new boost for

²⁰ Van Bleyswijck, *op. cit.*, p. 611.

²¹ Eekhout, 'De Delftse kamer van de V.O.C.', pp. 90-94.

²² Eekhout, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

²³ Roodenburg, 'Sier- en gebruiksaardewerk', p. 159.

the Delft economy. Often, pottery workshops sprang up in the premises of defunct breweries, a sector of the economy that was in trouble already since the early 1600s.²⁴ Information provided by Gerrit Paape, author of the first history of Delftware, *De plateelbakker of Delftsch aardewerk-maker* (1794), supplies the likely estimate that by the mid-18th century the pottery industry employed about 6,000 persons, or approximately a quarter of the working population of Delft.²⁵ These employment opportunities were a result of the global ocean-going trade organized by the Delft chamber of the V.O.C.

The significance of perilous overseas voyages to the collective imagination and identity of the seventeenth-century Dutch meant that it was impossible for Catholic authors not to touch on this subject in their discourse. First of all, there was the moral assessment by Dutch Catholics of the realities of foreign trade, which had to deal with the question of the methods by which the Dutch amassed their wealth. On 8 March 1610 Sasbout Vosmeer met in conference at Brussels with the provincial of the Jesuits, Franciscus Flerontinus, to iron out some of the contentious points that had caused misunderstanding between the Jesuits and the diocesan priests in the north. One of the points of the document produced by Vosmeer and Flerontinus concerned the voyages to the East Indies which, of course, were a new-found source of vast profit to the new Dutch commercial elites. As a matter of fact by 1630 the surplus wealth generated in major Dutch cities (especially Amsterdam) by the long-distance overseas trade with the Far East, Africa and the West Indies had entirely overshadowed the older capital based on trade in agricultural produce (grain, dairy), retailing, brewing and fishery.²⁶ In order to resolve the moral problems posed by these new trading opportunities Vosmeer and Flerontinus repeated the provisions of the papal bull *In Coena Domini*, which imposed sanctions on Catholics engaging in activities detrimental to other members of the Church. Sailing to the East Indies fell under the terms of *In Coena Domini* because during such maritime expeditions the Dutch engaged in privateering against Spanish and Portuguese vessels. Piracy was an act prohibited by *In Coena Domini* under threat of excommunication. Another counterargument to such voyages, determined by Vosmeer and Flerontinus, was that individuals embarking for the Orient had little to recommend them by way of morality:

²⁴ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 736.

²⁵ Roodenburg, 'Sier- en gebruiksaardewerk', p. 160.

²⁶ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 346.

Wy oordelen dat het vaaren naar Oost-Indie tenemaal moet afgeraaden worden; eensdeels om dat de voornaamste kooplui den bekennen dat die vaart tot noch toe zonder zeeroverye niet heeft konnen geschieden [...] Vorders ook / om dat 'er op sommige plaatzen tegen meer andere verbiedingen gezondigt wordt; en om dat die vaart niet zeer dienstig schijnt zoo wel voor het tijdelijk als voor het eeuwig welvaren van den gemeenen man.

We believe that one should dissuade individuals from travelling to the East Indies, partly because the greatest merchants declare that such voyages could not go ahead without some measure of piracy [...] next, because in some places sins are committed against many other prohibitions, and because such voyages do not seem to be beneficial for either the temporal or the eternal well-being of the common man.

While the Jesuits tended to take the more lenient view that journeys to the East or West Indies were not by definition a sinful activity condemned by the Church, others, such as Sasbout Vosmeer, advocated a rigid policy of withholding support for all institutions of the Dutch Republic, including the V.O.C.²⁷ Sasbout Vosmeer's uncompromising position did not escape the attention of the Dutch authorities. One of the charges that were brought up against him during the 1602 trial was that he had 'burdened the consciences' of Dutch Catholics working in the East and West Indies.²⁸ An awareness of the complexity of such dealings on the part of Dutch Catholics was probably the main reason why the compromise drafted by Vosmeer and Flerontinus was phrased in such a way as to dissuade Catholics from trading with the Indies but did not place an outright prohibition on that type of commerce. Whenever participating in the 'rich trades' was permitted, obviously under the condition that no piracy was involved, then a small number of Catholics could be found who engaged in such activities. Out of that handful the Rotterdam shipping magnate Johan van der Veeken, a southern Netherlander who had immigrated to the north in search of economic opportunity, even became a high-placed executive of the V.O.C.²⁹ A list of directors of the V.O.C. in Delft contains several surnames of the descendants of old Catholic regent families, the Sasbouts and Van der Dussens, both of which were actually related to Sasbout Vosmeer.³⁰ Catholics in official positions, like

²⁷ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, pp. 31-32.

²⁸ Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, p. 59.

²⁹ Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, pp. 31-32.

³⁰ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 616. For Pieter van der Dussen, Sasbout Vosmeer's cousin and one of his brother Tilman's Delft correspondents, see

Veeken in Rotterdam, though increasingly few and far between, contributed through their wealth and authority to creating a space of relative freedom from persecution for fellow believers. Other situations existed as well where to a Catholic the benefits of a voyage the East Indies seemed to outweigh the moral perils. Around 1660 the Amsterdam poet Joost van den Vondel, a convert to Catholicism, tried unsuccessfully to send his troublesome spendthrift son (also named Joost) to the Indies.³¹ Apparently, when all else had failed, a voyage to the East Indies was still seen as a viable corrective measure by Vondel's Catholic family.

Such dilemmas were by no means theoretical in a city such as Delft, whose society was strongly involved in the realities of the Dutch ocean-going trade. The maritime metaphors of the Dutch commercial macrocosm resonated quite naturally with the shipping- and trade-oriented culture of Delft and Delfshaven – a fact of which Johannes Baptist Stalpart van der Wiele, a priest-poet from Delft was very well aware. In a song for All Saints' Day ('Alder Heylighen') on 1 November, Stalpart van der Wiele compared the task of living a Christian life to the job of a ship's master who was in charge of bringing a vessel safely to its port of destination – the heavenly Jerusalem. The saints were likened to experienced harbor pilots who had the knowledge to guide maritime traffic past treacherous rocks for they had already successfully sailed the same route:

Van verr' soo groeten wy de blyde haven
 Van 't hoogh Jerusalem, die schoone stede,
 Daer ghij nu Borgers zyt, seer rijck van gaven,
 En altijdt leven sult in vaste vrede.
 Laet ons deelachtigh zijn van uw' gebeden,
 Ontsteeckt ons vyer en licht, toont ons de baken,
 Dat wy 't verwayde schip toch niet en stoten
 Aen Rootsen, maer met lijf ter haven raken;
 Ey stiert ons daer na toe, weest ons Piloten.

Weest ons Piloten; want ghy weet de streken,
 Waer dat de diepten zijn, waer dat de platen,
 Die ghy met groot geluck wel hebt geweken,
 Ghy weet oock wat Dieet van spijs, wat maten
 Van dranck men houdt; en hoe men de Piraten
 Somtyds ontlopen sal; somtyds bevechten;
 Wanneer men seylen moet, en wanneer swichten,

Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, p. 163.

³¹ Brandt, *Het leven van Joost van den Vondel*, p. 63.

Naer dat de baren hoogen ofte slechten;
Wanneer men werpen moet, en wanneer lichten.³²

From afar we greet the joyous harbor // Of high Jerusalem, that fair town // Which you [=the saints] are now citizens of, richly blessed // and where you shall live eternally in constant peace. // Intercede for us in your prayers // Ignite a fire for us and give us light, show us a beacon // To keep our ship, carried away by the storm // From crashing into the rocks, but let us reach the harbor safely; // And steer us there, our pilots be.

Be our pilots; for you know where the crosscurrents are // Where the depths are, and where the shallows // Which you avoided with great luck // You know what diet of food, what measure // Of drink one must keep, and how pirates // are sometimes to be avoided, and sometimes faced in combat // When one should set sail and when one should stay // If the waves are high or bad // When one should weigh and when one should lift anchor.

Stalpart's focus here was very specific, arguing through realistic similes (advice concerning piracy, the necessity of a proper diet to ensure survival, avoidance of natural obstacles) that every Christian's efforts ought to be aimed at safely sailing the vessel of his or her life to their final port of call. In another song, written for the feast-day of St. Willibrord on 7 November, Stalpart van der Wiele advised listeners:

Mijn hoop en sal niet feylen/
Want hebb' na 't juyste glas
Altijd gepoocht de seylen
Van 't salige Compas.³³

My hope shall never fail // Because I have always tried to sail // Taking my heading from the glass // of the blessed compass.

Such lessons would have been familiar to his listeners, many of whom either had first-hand experience in seagoing trade or were familiar with its dangers from oral narratives, songs or popular literature (chapbooks). An example of the latter was a sensational account (*Extract, ofte cort verhael*) of the tragic voyage of the ship *Nieu Delf*, which arrived in Batavia on 12 September 1647 after a voyage of seventeen months with only 152 out of 322 original crew and passengers left alive.³⁴

³² [Stalpart van der Wiele], *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*, pp. 1013-1017.

³³ [Stalpart van der Wiele], *op. cit.*, p. 1049.

³⁴ Van Lier, Dirck, *Extract, ofte cort verhael van 't Schip Nieu Delf. Hoe God de Heer-haer heeft besocht, door het Over-lijden van 170. Dooden [...]*. S.n. s.l., 1648.

An attractive figure of a ship that survived all perils was for Catholics the Barque of St. Peter, a symbol of the Catholic Church. The use of maritime imagery to denote the Church originated from the earliest Christian iconographic traditions, whose beginnings can be traced to passages in the Gospel of St. Matthew (14:22-33) where Christ rejoined the Apostles who were in a boat on the stormy Sea of Galilee, or the Gospel of St. John (21:1-14) where Christ assured the Apostles of a good catch if they followed His words. The Christian symbol of the Ship of the Church was additionally related to the person of St. Peter. This apostle, whom Christ called 'the rock on which I will build my church' (Matthew 16:18-19), was a fisherman, hence the symbol of the Barque specifically came to denote the Catholic Church headed by the Roman Pontiff, the successor of St. Peter.

Polemicists of the Dutch Counter-Reformation, such as the priest Cornelis Vermeulen (1644), author of the song-book *'t Ronde Jaer* ('All year round') or the anonymous authors of a Catholic pamphlet entitled *Nieuwe legenden van verscheyde Nieuwe Leraers* (1648), resorted to this symbolism no less frequently than Stalpart van der Wiele.³⁵ A song for the feast-day of St. Willibrord (9 November) called on the Dutch to ponder the course of two ships representing, respectively, the Catholic and Dutch Reformed Church:

't Ronde Jaer

Noch dit / noch dat / ô Batavier
Bevroed dan doch voor 't lest mijn woorden/
En zeylt doch niet meer overstier/
Vaert teghen wint niet meer ten Noorden.
Draeyt eer-je sinckt / u kours ten Zuyen/
Soeckt plaets in Sinte Pieters Schip/
Of anders sult ghy recht gaen kruyen
Naer Satans Helsch-vervloeckte klip.³⁶

Nieuwe legenden...

Ey let dan op mijn woorden
O vroomen Batavier:
Siet eens hoe sy ten Noorden
Wegh zeylen over stier;
Draeyt ghy u cours ten Zuyden
Naer Sinte Pieters schip,
Of anders sult ghy kruyden
Eylaes! naer s' duyvels klip.³⁷

Aye, mark my words // O pious Batavian: // see how they're sailing // north-bound, oversteering; // turn round and head south // towards the ship of St. Peter // or else you'll surely crash, alas // Straight into the devil's cliffs.

³⁵ Both songs, of which a stanza is cited below, are in fact paraphrases of a song about St. Willibrord – sung to the melody of the 'Wilhelmus' – from Guillaume de Pretere's *Gheestelijck Paradijsken der Wel-lusticheden* (Antwerpen: Hendrick Aertsens, 1619), p. 35. A paraphrase of the same song (but lacking this particular stanza) was made by Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-laers Feest-dagen*, pp. 1051-1055.

³⁶ [Vermeulen], *'t Ronde Jaer*, p. 141.

³⁷ 'Donheylige kerck' in: *Nieuwe Legendes van verscheyde Nieuwe Leraers*, p. 8.

After the Reformation the symbol of a ship was sometimes transferred to the new Protestant denominations. Maritime imagery was used in a satirical manner to depict various religions in 'Fishing for Souls', a painting by the Delft-born Adriaen Pietersz van de Venne (1589-1662).³⁸ Van der Venne's perspective was that of an avowed Calvinist. The Calvinist boats in the painting were crewed by serious ministers clad in sober black, while the Catholic boat, already leaning perilously to one side and possibly taking on water, was manned by a raucous and colorful bunch of bishops, prelates and monks. The way 'competing' religions were presented in Van der Venne's painting was, of course, oversimplified: it had the quality of a stereotype in which outward appearances and perceptions mattered the most. Alongside the positive self-image of the churches that had sprung out of the Reformation, Van der Venne conveyed a traditionally negative representation of Catholics that still strongly resonated (in 1614, during the Eleven Years' Truce with Spain) with echoes of the religious-political propaganda of the Dutch Revolt.

The contrast between a Catholic and a Protestant ship in the songs of Catholic polemicist-songwriters can be seen as a strongly-worded reaction to the Protestant satirical treatment of the symbolism of the Ship of the Church. Interestingly, however, this response was phrased in terms of persuasion. The problem of the crew of the Calvinist vessel lay in their decision to sail into a strong headwind. The effect was a loss of control over their ship, to which sailors referred by the term 'oversteering' (*overstuur*).³⁹ The disaster which seemed to await the Calvinists was not inevitable, however; the crew could still correct this problem by altering their course. The internal logic of the situation, as the authors of these songs expressed it, was that the Protestant churches were sailing on a course bound for Satan's northern rocks very much in spite of their best intentions. A collision could still be avoided, however, if the crew once again regained proper control over their vessel. Behind this metaphor was a belief in the fundamental free will of individuals. Just as the Calvinists had navigated away from the Church, so they were free to set their sights on it once again, and to return to the safe southern seas of Catholicism sailed by the Barque of St. Peter.

The maritime geography of the song, most of all the northern course of the Calvinist ship, could have been simply the result of the religious

³⁸ Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum SK-A-447.

³⁹ See WNT, 'Overstuur' 1. Nicolaes Witsen's *Aeloude en hedendaegsche scheepsbouw* (1674) gave a similar definition of this term: 'Overstier: Teleur, bedorven, alsof men zeide, 't is achter af, in zee, en zoo onthandigh', p. 504.

and political division of the Netherlands since the late 16th century into the northern (Protestant) and southern (Catholic) provinces. However, there was yet another factor that might have contributed to plotting this north-south course. During the 17th century the Dutch, among them especially the Calvinists of towns in Holland, Zeeland and Frisia, started sailing for commercial reasons to the Arctic. The northern polar regions entered the popular imagination of the Dutch owing to exploration by Dutch sailors Balthasar de Moucheron, Willem Barentsz, and Jacob van Heemskerck who undertook to find a 'North-East Passage' to the Orient. The best-known of these expeditions was the one undertaken by Barentsz. Together with Van Heemskerck, in 1596, after discovering Bear Island and Spitsbergen, Barentsz navigated around the northern tip of Nova Zemlya but was forced by ice to winter on the island. Although Barentsz died on the return journey in the spring of 1597, most of his men made it safely home. News of the expeditions reached the Dutch through travel accounts such as Gerrit de Veer's *Waerachtighe beschryvinghe van drie seylagien* ('True description of three voyages') published in 1598, and *Voyagie, ofte schip-vaert* ('A voyage, or journey by ship') by Jan Huygen van Linschoten from 1601.⁴⁰ The northward journeys of exploration were abandoned in the early 1600s; after Cornelis de Houtman sailed around the Cape of Africa opening an effective route to the East Indies there was no longer a need for exploring the hazardous northern crossing. The voyages of Barentsz and others nevertheless stimulated the growth of the Dutch whaling industry. The sustained commercial exploitation of the Arctic became technically feasible after the first recorded walrus-hunting expeditions to Spitsbergen had been organized in 1612 by the merchants Willem Cornelisz van Muyden and Claes Cornelisz van Sardam. Later voyages, whose objective shifted to whaling, concentrated on the island discovered in 1614 by Jan Jacobsz May and named after him Jan Mayen Island. Eventually the whaling trade grew so much that an entire Dutch village called Smeerenburg (roughly translated as 'Blubberville') was built on Spitsbergen to house the sailors and workmen during the summer season. Some crews tried to spend the winter in Smeerenburg, but the toll in human life owing to disease, malnutrition and harsh conditions was so high that such attempts were soon abandoned.⁴¹

⁴⁰ De Veer, *Waerachtighe beschryvinghe van drie seylagien*. Amsterdam: Cornelis Claesz, 1598.

Van Linschoten, *Voyagie, ofte schip-vaert, van Ian Hvyghen van Linschoten, van by noorden om langes Noorvvegen [...] tot voorby de revier Oby [...]*. Franeker: Gerard Ketel, 1601.

⁴¹ Van Tielhof, 'Een open economie, in voor- en tegenspoed', p. 174.

The W.I.C. and V.O.C. were not the only companies residing in Delft during the Dutch Golden Age.⁴² While the Dutch oriental trade was certainly the most spectacular and generated large profits for Holland, the northern fishery, and especially whaling, was one of the no less important branches of what some scholars have called the 'first modern economy'.⁴³ One of the routes to the north started out in Delft and its harbor in Delfshaven. The Nordic Company (*Noortsche Compagnie*) was founded in 1614 by a group of merchants from Amsterdam and Delft. It was headed by Lambert van Tweenhuysen, who in the same year established a second enterprise, the New Netherlands Company (*Nieuw Nederland Compagnie*) to trade with North America. Many of the merchants who supported these ventures were staunch Calvinists. The Calvinist theologian and cartographer Petrus Plancius (Peter Platevoet), for example, advised the Northern Company in legal disputes regarding the territory covered under its charter.⁴⁴ Some of the merchants delegated by the Delft chamber of the company, Dirck Adriaensz Leverstein and Nicasius Kyen, eventually broke away from the Northern Company to set up a smaller enterprise of their own.⁴⁵ The Northern Company initially had four chambers in Amsterdam, Delft, Rotterdam and Enkhuizen. Three new chambers were set up in 1617: Middelburg, Vlissingen and Veere. The Delft chamber was the second-largest shareholder. The chambers operated as autonomous companies in their own right, with a fixed proportion of the profits allotted to each local organization.⁴⁶

⁴² Next to the V.O.C. and W.I.C. Delft was also the headquarters of the English Merchant Adventurers, who dealt mainly in cloth. The Merchant Adventurers established themselves in Delft, for political reasons, in 1621 and were to stay there till 1635. The Merchant Adventurers initially preferred Rotterdam, but they changed their mind since that town was known to be in the hands of the Remonstrants, to whom James I of England was strongly opposed. On the Merchant Adventurers in Delft see Te Lintum, *De Merchant Adventurers in de Nederlanden*, pp. 75-97; Oosterbaan, *De Oude en Nieuwe Gasthuis te Delft*, pp. 261-262. The 'English court' at Delft was situated in the Prinsenhof. A bank of exchange (*wisselbank*) was established in the Town Hall, Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, p. 619.

⁴³ The hypothesis that the seventeenth-century province of Holland was the 'first modern economy' was launched by De Vries and Van Der Woude, *Nederland 1500-1815. De eerste ronde van moderne economische groei*. The ambivalence of this hypothesis was examined by Price, 'The First Modern Society? The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century', pp. 3-21. For a recent reaction see e.g. Van Tielhof, 'Een open economie, in voor- en tegenspoed', pp. 177-180 and p. 504.

⁴⁴ Muller, *Geschiedenis der Noordsche compagnie*, pp. 314-315.

⁴⁵ Muller, *op. cit.*, p. 65 and p. 78.

⁴⁶ Muller, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-80.

Whaling was a risky trade, so the Dutch initially called on the expertise of skilled Basque fishermen, but since the 1620s foreign crews were increasingly replaced by Dutch sailors. Disasters occurred often enough, especially when the captains sent the vessels through drift ice in search of remote hunting-grounds.⁴⁷ Through its entire existence the *Noortsche Compagnie* struggled to cope with private ventures which undermined its monopoly position. Stiff competition from the English and Danish additionally reduced the company's profit margins. The corporation gradually disintegrated into a vast number of small enterprises. The company's charter was not renewed after it expired in 1642.⁴⁸ When Dirck van Bleyswijck wrote his history of Delft in 1667, the activities of the Nordic Company and its successors, such as the Greenland Company (*Groenlandsche Compagnie*) in the town's macrocosm of trade and commerce were a thing of the past,⁴⁹ but not before seagoing voyages, the craft of sailing and navigation, had become a powerful metaphor in the discourse of religious polemical authors.

7.3. REVISING A MORAL TOPOGRAPHY: THE DUTCH REPUBLIC AS A 'PROMISED LAND'?

Van der Veen narrated the identity of the Dutch Republic in terms of the Biblical *topos* of the 'promised land', which was now projected onto the contemporary watery geography of the northern Dutch provinces (*see above, Chapter 7.2.*). Perhaps to lend greater legitimacy to his literary vision of the Netherlands, Van der Veen parenthesized his poem by rows of Scriptural references. His belief in the Republic as a 'promised land' stemmed essentially from a widespread conviction of the Calvinists (but also other Dutch Protestant) who regarded themselves as a new 'chosen people' of God, the new Israel.⁵⁰ This Scriptural national mythology,

⁴⁷ Muller, *op. cit.*, 106-112.

⁴⁸ Muller, writing in the spirit of 19th century liberalism, argued that the folding of the Northern Company provided a model argument for the superiority of free market competition over state-sponsored monopolies (Muller, *op. cit.*, pp. 350-354).

⁴⁹ In *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, [vol. ii], p. 619, Van Bleyswijck actually referred to the no longer operating Greenland Company (*Groenlandsche Compagnie*) which had been based in Delft.

⁵⁰ For an introductory overview of the subject of the Netherlands as 'new Israel' see Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, pp. 93-125. A detailed cultural and art-historical

paralleled in some ways the 'Batavian myth' of Aurelius, Geldenhouwer and Grotius, and dominated the historical and political mindset of the Protestantized 17th century Dutchmen and -women. Delivered from slavery and idolatry in the land of Egypt (the Catholic Habsburg Netherlands), the Reformed Dutch became the new chosen people to whom God had given a new 'promised land', Canaan, in the north: the Dutch Republic. The role of the pharaoh in this Dutch version of the Biblical Exodus narrative was typically given over to Philip II or the Duke of Alva, whereas the new Moses leading the Israelites out of slavery was unequivocally identified with William of Orange, the leader of the Dutch Revolt. Such Biblical themes and others (e.g. the conflict of Saul and David) were prevalent themes in the 'Wilhelmus'⁵¹ and similar Protestant 'battle songs' (*strijdliederen*) from songbooks such as the *Nieu geusen lieden-boecxken* or its more refined younger sibling, the *Nederlantsche Gedenck-Clanck* (1626) of Adriaen Valerius.⁵²

The 1590s in the Netherlands saw the rise of a new spirit in the Republic. Early-modern entrepreneurial capitalism joined hands with new thinking about statehood and society. During the period 1580-1630 the population in some cities of the Netherlands, especially those of the largest province, Holland, multiplied owing to the arrival of Protestant (especially Calvinist) immigrants from the southern Netherlands.⁵³ These immigrants brought with them substantial capital and skills; their arrival injected fresh energy into the war-fractured economy of the Republic. Not all towns profited from the manufacturing boom in equal measure. Leiden and especially Amsterdam belonged to the frontrunners in this respect. Delft, on the other hand, was relatively late in picking up the concept of employing a Flemish and Brabantine workforce to boost its textile industry. When the town did seek to employ Flemish immigrants, it did so partly in order to seek an alternative source of revenue to supplement its failing breweries. Petrus Montanus, who edited Lodovico Guicciardini's account of Delft (in *Beschryvinghe van alle de Neder-landen...*,

analysis of the theme of the Dutch as the children of Israel (*Nederkinderen Israels*) can be found in Ziemba, *Nowe dzieci Izraela*, esp. pp. 125-189.

⁵¹ The 'Wilhelmus' is the present-day national anthem (since 1932) of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

⁵² A prayer in Valerius' *Gedenck-Clanck* is frequently cited as the text where the analogy between the Dutch and the 'chosen people' of Israel was pronounced in its most explicit form. See Schama, *Embarassment of Riches*, pp. 98-99 and Ziemba, *Nowe dzieci Izraela*, p. 11.

⁵³ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, p. 309.

Amsterdam: Willem Janszoon [Blaeu], 1612), described the turnaround in the town's immigration policy:

Dese stadt haer lang vernoeghende met heur eyghen ingheborenen ende borgerye / noch over eenighe jaren doen by de omliggende steden de uytgheweken Vlaminghen en andere willekom waren ende ontfanghen werden / den selven vergunnende der Poorteren gherechtigheyden, privilegien ende vryheden / by haer niet ontfanghen en zijn gheweest: tot dat zy gesien hebben het merckelijck welvaren der selver steden door het ontfanghen der vreemdelingen: daer benefens by heur de neeringe der Brouwers een weynich slabbackende.⁵⁴

This town remained so long satisfied with its own inhabitants and burghers, so that even when several years ago the Flemish refugees and other immigrants obtained a welcome in nearby cities, which offered them citizens' rights as well as various rights and privileges, no such thing happened in Delft; things only changed after they [i.e. the magistrates of Delft] witnessed how these immigrants spurred a remarkable economic growth in those cities, added to which was the fact that the breweries were doing somewhat poorly at that time.

If Montanus blamed local isolationism for the unwillingness of Delft to admit Flemish immigrants, then Dirck van Bleyswijck, writing much later in the mid-17th century, believed the main cause to have been a religious one:

[...] in 't begin vande Nederlandsche troubelen, / als onse nabuyrige Landt-saeten in Vlaenderen en Brabandt om de Religie willen door d'inquisitie / mitsgaders de wreedheyt en ongehoorde Tyrannie van den Hertoch van Alba / met alle onbermhertigheyt te vier en te zwaert soo vervolgt / en van haer goederen en leven berooft wierden / dat sy geperst en gedwongen waren / Huys en Hof / Landt en Sand / en alles te verlaten / en haer met Wijf en Kinderen op de vlucht te begeven / onder de protectie van andere Overheden / alwaer sy de vryheyt van conscientie mochten hebben / om in't openbaer Gode te dienen naer zynen heyligen wille / als in Engelandt / Duytschlandt / mitsgaders ook dese geconfedereerde Provincien / dewelcke de wreedheyt van den Albaen vieriglijck tegen stonden / en haer gemeente voor het onverdraeglijck jock der Spangiaerden / met goed / bloed / en gemoed sochten te bewaren / en dierhalve geen geringe toeloop kregen: Doch de Magistraet deser Stadt toen ter tijdt noch meerendeels Rooms-gesint zijnde / hielden haere Poorten geslooten / ende refuseerden de Vluchtelingen in te nemen / laetende haer met groote meenichte buyten-

⁵⁴ Guicciardini, *Beschryvinghe van alle de Neder-landen*, p. 204.

om passeren / haer wysende naer andere nabuyrige Steden / die doenmaels meer volck gebreck hadden.⁵⁵

[...] at the beginning of the Revolt in the Netherlands, when our compatriots in Flanders and Brabant were persecuted by fire and by the sword for the sake of their religion by the inquisition under the tyranny of the duke of Alva, deprived of life and possessions and forced to flee with their wives and children, leaving behind homes and land, they sought refuge in other countries, where they could enjoy freedom of conscience to publicly serve God as it is His will: in England, Germany, and in the United Netherlands; [the latter] resisting Alva with all their might, protected this community against the intolerable Spanish yoke, sparing no expense, and therefore took in many of these immigrants. The magistrates of this town, on the contrary, being still Catholic, kept the gates closed, refusing to take in any refugees, directing them to travel to other neighboring towns that were underpopulated at that time.

Recently, Van Bleyswijck's opinion has been rightly questioned by J. Koppenol, who pointed out that Delft was already governed by a set of Protestant magistrates when the largest wave of immigrants arrived from the south shortly after 1584.⁵⁶ In those years Delft became involved in a dispute with Leiden over Flemish immigrant labor. The Leiden magistrates complained that the Delft authorities offered unfair financial benefits to those Flemish artisans who agreed to re-settle in Delft.⁵⁷ Among the perks offered to these investors were free housing and workshop space in appropriated Catholic monasteries:

Hier door zy met rype deliberatie groote ende merckelijcke onkosten ghe-daen hebben aen eenighe verlaten Cloosteren/ om die te approprieren tot bequame wooninghen voor den vreemdelingen die voortaan ghesint soudē wesen/ aldaer oock in te voeren ende te handelen de weverye van Sayeten ende andere Greynen/ ghenietende stadts vryheden/ oock daer benefens andere vereeringhen/ daer op ghemaectt nieuwe ordonnantien/ keuren ende andere nootelijcke dinghen tot gherief.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, [vol. ii], p. 740. See also *ibid.*, [vol. i], p. 425 and [vol. ii], p. 603.

⁵⁶ Koppenol, *Leids heelal*, p. 207.

⁵⁷ For this conflict see Posthumus, *De geschiedenis van de Leidsche lakenindustrie*, ii, pp. 145-152. For a recent analysis of the dispute between Leiden and Delft and its impact on the relations between both towns see Koppenol, *Leids heelal*, pp. 207-208.

⁵⁸ Guicciardini, *Beschryvinghe*, fol. 204. Cited by Van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft*, [vol. ii], pp. 740-741.

After taking stock of the situation and having debated the matter thoroughly, they [= the magistrates of Delft] ordered several abandoned cloisters to be converted at great expense into comfortable lodgings for the immigrants who might be persuaded to move there and to take up trade as weavers of various types of fustian cloth, enjoying all the city's freedoms and other privileges. For that purpose new acts and regulations were issued, and all the necessary things arranged.

The labor dispute with Leiden was resolved in 1595, when both towns reached a satisfactory settlement.⁵⁹ Apart from the industrial production of heavier kinds of cloth (fustian), the artistic weaving industry enjoyed notable success. Convents were now being freely 'privatized' and converted into industrial infrastructure with little or no regard for their previous religious function. In 1593, François Spiering, a Calvinist businessman from Antwerp, obtained the former convent of St. Agnes in Delft to start a tapestry-weaving workshop.⁶⁰ The flourishing tapestry industry owed its success to an influx of artists and artisans from the southern Netherlands, e.g. Karel van Mander the elder and his son, both of whom produced refined Renaissance designs on mythological themes for Spiering's workshop. Many of Spiering's products appealed to an international clientèle: Sir Francis Drake purchased from Spiering a series themed around the goddess Diana. Tapestries on recent historical themes dear to the hearts of militant Dutch and English Protestants, such as the relief of Leiden or the defeat of the Spanish Armada, were likewise commissioned at the Delft ateliers.⁶¹

The arrival of substantial groups of immigrants from the southern Netherlands had very specific consequences for the political makeup of Holland's cities from the late 16th century onwards. On the one hand, there was a new class of regents whose thinking was rooted in the legacy of Erasmian humanism, and who favored a non-denominational, individualistic and strongly subjectivized Protestant Christianity. One of the major exponents of this line of thought was Dirk Volckertszoon Coornhert, an influential non-denominational Protestant philosopher who consistently argued for freedom of worship for all religions in the Republic under the patronage of state-enforced tolerance. In this respect Coornhert remained true to the policies of William of Orange expressed in the articles of the Pacification of Ghent (1576). Many of the confessionally

⁵⁹ Koppenol, *Leids heelal*, p. 208.

⁶⁰ Van der Wiel, 'Delft in de Gouden Eeuw', p. 55.

⁶¹ Van Zijl, 'De Delftse wandtapijten', pp. 202-209.

non-aligned Protestant intellectuals on the side of the revolt, such as the Land's Advocate Johan van Oldenbarnevelt, the secretary-poet Jan van Hout of Leiden, or the Amsterdam mayor Cornelis Pieterszoon Hooft (and his son, the poet and historian Pieter Corneliszoon), adhered to the essential provisions of Orange's religious settlement long after the political and social balance had changed to the disfavor of this form of institutionalized 'toleration'.

On the other hand a much more radical model arose out of the theology and ecclesiastical organization promoted by John Calvin. Counteracting the 'libertine' tendencies of the regents, which they viewed as pro-Catholic,⁶² the Calvinist *predikanten* sought to increase their influence over society, including matters of state policy, in opposition to the civic authorities which acted as the owners of the ecclesiastical infrastructure. The Calvinists faction, therefore, soon found itself at odds with less radical Protestants in the city and local governments. The established town elites of the early 1600s represented an outlook which, with its the principle of 'toleration' under the umbrella of local governments, was generally closer to William of Orange than to the claims of the Calvinist *predikanten*. The merchant families holding the strings of power in Dutch towns believed, rightly, that sweeping change of the kind postulated by the Calvinists would undermine their monopoly on matters of governance. The preachers and their political entourage, on the other hand, were often newcomers to the local political scene. They relied on the support of disaffected middle- and lower middle class townsmen, among whom were radical Calvinist immigrants from the southern Netherlands. The refugees from Flanders and Brabant, skilled laborers, merchants and craftsmen, were a significant addition to the workforce of cities such as Amsterdam, Leiden, Delft and others. For these Brabantine or Flemish Protestants coming to the Republic represented an ideological choice as much as a choice for a better life. Unsurprisingly, therefore, they were very much in favor of continuing the war with Spain in order to liberate their native provinces, as they saw it, from the yoke of Catholic oppression. These refugees had been the vanguard of the Dutch revolt ever since it started in its initial flashpoints, the cities of Flanders (Gent and Bruges) and Brabant (Antwerp) in the southern Netherlands. They were strongly committed to what they saw as the only way forward:

⁶² During the years of the Twelve Years' Truce, for instance, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt was continually accused by the radical Calvinist faction of orchestrating a conspiracy aimed, as many contemporaries believed, at 'bringing in the pope and the Spaniard' (Carleton, *Letters*, p. 182).

continuing the struggle of the Revolt through propaganda and by force of arms. It is the presence of these immigrants in the key cities of the United Netherlands during the years of the Twelve Years' Truce (1609-1621) that provided the most support to the Calvinist ideologues who were in favor of continuing the conflict with Spain until a final, decisive victory would be reached.

To non-Catholics, such as the Calvinist immigrants from the southern Netherlands, the northern provinces could have indeed appeared as a 'Promised Land' – a refuge that guaranteed its inhabitants an unlimited freedom of conscience and an unmolested religious sensibility (*gevoelen*). This specific form of religious toleration was, according to Van der Veen, the principal reason why God had blessed the Dutch, the 'new children of Israel' (*Nederkinderen*), with material prosperity, so that only a lasting victory in the international political arena was required to complete this picture of perfection. Yet it was precisely substance of this patriotic myth, by which the Netherlands were the God-given abode of a new 'Chosen People', that made it unacceptable to Roman Catholics. The 'Promised Land' of Van der Veen or others, as a matter of fact, did not betoken freedom to Roman Catholics, but in the first place to Calvinists, and next, to other Protestants or even to individuals who were not aligned with any particular religious denomination. Owing to their role as the *avant-garde* of the Revolt the Calvinists naturally considered themselves after 1572 as the *pars pro toto* of all Dutch.

The example of Joost van den Vondel and his *Pascha* is sometimes cited as an argument to the contrary, namely, a Catholic poet's version of the Batavian myth.⁶³ This argument, however, is not convincing because Vondel in fact only wrote *Pascha* in 1612, while still an Anabaptist, at a considerable period of time before his gradual conversion to Catholicism in the late 1630s. The example of Vondel, at that time a Protestant poet whose predominant audience was non-Catholic, indeed justifies the statement that this myth, in its primary, identity-building function, belonged to the intellectual arsenal of Dutch Calvinists and non-Calvinist Protestants.

Catholics, however, interacted with the discourses produced by this myth mainly by pointing out what they perceived to be inconsistencies in the analogy between the contemporary Dutch and the 'chosen people' of the Old Testament. The *Nieuwe Legenden van verscheyde Nieuwe Leraers* ('New legends of various new teachers', Ghent: Boudewijn van den Berch, 1648) was a pamphlet written in the southern Netherlands, but

⁶³ Schama, *Embarrassment of Riches*, p. 105, Ziembra, *Nowe dzieci Izraela*, p. 15.

probably, given the frequent references to Holland, addressed to readers from that province. Its anonymous authors⁶⁴ effectively ridiculed the self-image of Calvinists and other non-Catholics identifying themselves as the new 'chosen people' of Israel. With a Scriptural passage and a colloquial proverb the readers were asked to consider the discrepancy between the pious appearances held up by the Calvinists and the historical realities of a collective, and sometimes violent, rejection of Roman Catholic Christianity in the years of the Dutch Revolt:

Het en zijn altemael geen Israëlitien, die uyt Israël zijn, noch oock alle Abrahams kinderen die Abrahams zaedt zijn, Rom. 9. 6.

Dat is in goet rondt Hollants geseyt: 't Zijn al gheen Kocks die langhe messen draghen.⁶⁵

All are not Israelites that are of Israel: Neither are all they that are the seed of Abraham, children [Rom. 9: 6-7]

Or to say the same in good plain Dutch: all are not cooks who carry long knives.

Meanwhile, other Catholic writers turned the tables on the discourse of the Calvinist *Nederkinderen* by actually re-telling the plight of Catholics in the northern provinces in terms of the narrative of the people of Israel:

Jae / segghen sommige Broederkens / de Papisten woonen in Hollandt soo vry als de Gheusen. Antwoorde: De Catholijcke woonen al-daer ghelijck de kinderen van Israel in de slavernije van Egypten woonden / ende in de swaere ghevanghenisse van Babylonien / verdruckt onder alle tyrannie / slavernije ende vervolghinghen met bloedighe Placcaeten verjaeghen ende verbannen uyt het landt...⁶⁶

Aye, some brothers [i.e. Calvinists] say that the Papists in Holland live there as freely as the Calvinists ['geuzen']. Answer: The Catholics are like the chil-

⁶⁴ The authors of *Nieuwe legenden* went under the initials 'G. and C.' (G. ende C.). It would be tempting to see under 'G.' the Catholic polemicist from Delft and Flanders, Arnout van Geluwe. Although no obvious reason exists for such an identification, there are some similarities between this publication and the work of Van Geluwe, most especially his *Catalogue ende vervolgh van alle de principaelste Reformateurs ofte Voor-Loopers des grooten Anti-Christ* (Ghent: Maximiliaen Graet, 1663). The latter, though much complex, shares with the *Nieuwe legenden* the structure of a 'dictionary of heretics'. The same printer Boudewijn van den Berch who issued *Nieuwe legenden* was responsible for printing Van Geluwe's *Den gheestelijken jaegher van Sampsons vossen* in the same year 1648.

⁶⁵ *Nieuwe legenden*, fol. [A1 r].

⁶⁶ Van Geluwe, *Kort verhael*, p. 11.

dren of Israel enslaved by the Egyptians or enduring severe Babylonian captivity; repressed by tyranny, suffering slavery, under penalties imposed by bloody placards, expelled and banished out of the country...

The author of the words cited above was Arnout van Geluwe, a Flemish weaver who worked since 1626 in one of the many Delft workshops employing immigrant laborers.⁶⁷ Although Van Geluwe had been baptized and raised a Catholic in Flanders, he probably developed an affinity for Protestant ideas in his youth, which contributed to his becoming a Calvinist church-goer and 'sympathizer' (*liefhebber*), though probably not a registered member (*lidmaat*) of the Reformed Church in Delft.⁶⁸ It is not certain when Van Geluwe returned to Catholicism, although there are indications that his conversion took place around 1640.⁶⁹ Van Geluwe left Delft around 1644, possibly to avoid trial under a fabricated charge of espionage for the Spanish.⁷⁰ After returning to the southern Netherlands Van Geluwe became a fiery polemicist for the Catholic cause. Over a space of thirty years he produced a considerable *oeuvre* of no less than forty-two identified pamphlets and religious-polemical treatises.⁷¹ Assuming the *sobriquet* of an 'uneducated Flemish peasant' (*ongeleterde Vlaem-schen boer*), the layman Van Geluwe developed a witty and combative style of religious disputation. One of Van Geluwe's favorite rhetorical strategies in this self-created role was the Socratic method of following through his opponents' train of thought to reveal inconsistencies or contradictions. Yet even while putting on the mask of a simpleton, Van Geluwe revealed significant learning and erudition which comprised an extensive knowl-

⁶⁷ For Van Geluwe and his substantial impact on Catholic-Protestant religious debate in the mid-17th century see Snellaert, *Arnoud van Geluwe, bygenaemd de vlaem-sche boer*; Van Acker, 'Arnout van Geluwe', pp. 240-242; Van Puffelen, 'Geluwe, Arnout van', pp. 249-254, *Aernout Van Geluwe* (2 vols.), and *Poëzie van Arnoud van Geluwe, de Vlaamse boer (1602-na 1670)*; a recent contribution to research on Van Geluwe is Van Eekelen, *Een redetwist voor het geloof*. Abels, 'Kerk en religie...', pp. 73-74, briefly mentions Van Geluwe but identifies him erroneously as a priest of the Jesuit order. Van Gheluwe's interest in language is cited by Porteman and Smits-Veld in the context of the Calvinist States' Bible translation (*Statenbijbel*), *Een nieuw vaderland voor de muzen*, pp. 461-462.

⁶⁸ Van Puffelen, *Aernout van Geluwe*, p. 8. See also Van Eekelen, *Een redetwist voor het geloof*, p. 17.

⁶⁹ Van Eekelen, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁷⁰ Van Geluwe, *Kort verhael*, fol. 89-90.

⁷¹ Based on the bibliography provided by Van Eekelen, *Een redetwist voor het geloof*, pp. 77-92.

edge of the Holy Scripture, the writings of the Church Fathers as well as of contemporary Roman Catholic and Reformed theology.

In *Kort verhael van een achthien-jarighe Hollandtsche reyse* ('Brief account of an eighteen-year journey to Holland'; Antwerp: widow of Jan Cnobbaert, 1650), Van Geluwe offered advice about the culture and mentality of the Calvinists to young Catholics who were intending to emigrate from Flanders to the northern provinces. His aim, essentially, was to provide Catholics with concepts required to cope with the typical arguments that one might encounter in an inter-religious debate. Most of all, readers were provided with examples of how the *principium commune* of Roman Catholic and Protestant theology (especially its foundations in the Holy Scripture) could be employed to defend an orthodox Catholic point of view. In addition to this, Van Geluwe proved himself adept in applying the historical method of conducting a polemic (which went back to Caesar Baronius's *Annales Ecclesiastici*), where the unbroken continuity of Catholic doctrine was brought forward as the main argument for the legitimacy of the Catholic Church.⁷²

Van Geluwe urged young Catholics to preserve their Catholic faith and identity, additionally impressing on them a unique sense of Flemish patriotism. With the *principium commune* in mind, but also, no doubt, aware of the self-image of the Protestant Dutch as the 'chosen people', Van Geluwe compared Catholic immigrants from Flanders to the children of Israel who had stood by their religious beliefs even when they remained isolated within a hostile population:

[...] Ick bidd' u lieden oock hert-grondelijck dat ghy de nieuw-ghesinde niet ghelijck en wordt om Godt ende sijne Heylighen te blasphemeren / noch de Heylighe Roomsche Kercke / *die een vastigheydt ende colomne de waerheyt is* [1.Tim.3.v.15] ende wacht u oock wel van u soet geurigh Vaderland te verachten, daer ghy het leven ontvanghen hebt ende soo langhe op-gevoedt zijt: ende weest oock altijd ghedachtigh dat Godt soo dickmael de kinderen van Israel waerschout dat sy de Heydenen niet ghelijck en souden worden in het naer-volghen van hun superstieten ende af-goderije / daer Godt een vijandt af is: maer dat sy volstandigh souden blijven by de Wet hunder Vaederen.⁷³

[...] I implore you from the depths of my heart not to become like the heretics by blaspheming God, His saints or the Holy Roman [Catholic] Church that is

⁷² Van Geluwe, *Kort verhael*, fol. [† 8 v]. On Baronius and the historical method, see Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, pp. 749; Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, pp. 55-56.

⁷³ Van Geluwe, *Kort verhael*, fol. † r.

'the pillar and ground of the truth' [Tm 1: 3,15], and furthermore, to refrain from expressing disdain for your sweet-scented Fatherland, where you came to life and where you have been brought up; then, be aware that God often warns the children of Israel not to become like the pagans by imitating their superstitions and idolatry (all of which is inimical to God), but instead [calls on them] to be steadfast in obeying the Law of their fathers.

The images and examples of the people of Israel who remained true to their beliefs and traditions were persuasively offered to Flemish Catholic immigrants, who wavered in their religious identity, thereby stimulating them to preserve their own religious and cultural patrimony in a Calvinist-dominated society.

All this meant that for Van Geluwe the Dutch Republic could never be a 'Promised Land' for its Catholic population. On the contrary, in the writings of Catholic publicists, the northern Netherlands were identified with radically different territories and *topoi* of the Holy Scripture. To some authors, the 'Batavian' plurality of religious belief brought to mind Babel and its confusion of tongues.⁷⁴ Still others, like Van Geluwe, speaking from his position as a former *émigré*, were reminded of Babylon, a land of exile for the people of Israel.⁷⁵

Ultimately, where a convinced Calvinist like Van der Veen maintained that the Netherlands offered the utmost freedom of conscience for everyone regardless of their views ('Een vrye wooning voor het tedere gewiss' / Daar jeder int gevoel mach blijven dien hy is / En ongequetst int licht het selve mach beleeven'),⁷⁶ Van Geluwe would have strongly disagreed. Perhaps even referring obliquely to his own past sympathy for Calvinist beliefs during his years spent in Delft, Van Geluwe wrote:

Ick meende dat sy soo goedertieren ende bermhertigh waeren als *Christus* selfs is / om dat sommige menschen altijd van hun goetheydt roemen / ende segghen: Hollandt is het vrije Neder-landt: men vervolgt of men haet daer niemandt om sijn gheloof. Antwoorde: Dat het is een vry landt / daer

⁷⁴ [Verstegen], *De spiegel der Nederlandsche elenden*, p. 18.

⁷⁵ Cf. Van Geluwe, *Kort verhael*, p. 17 and p. 19. Here, Van Geluwe conflates both images by calling the northern provinces 'that confused Babylon, where one is continually building the tower of Babel, in disagreement caused by unending conflicts and disputes over religion' ('[...] dat verwerde Babylon / daer-men ghedurigh den Tooren van Babel op is bouwende door den oneyndelijcken twist der disputation om de religie over-hoop ligghende', *Kort verhael*, p. 89.

⁷⁶ Van der Veen, *Zinne-beelden oft Adams Appel*, p. 9.

men alle boosheydt vry uyt wercken magh / maer niet om alle waere Gods-dienstigheyt te moghen uyt-wercken.⁷⁷

I used to believe that they [= Calvinists] were as good and merciful as Christ Himself, because some people always praised their goodness by saying: Holland is the free Netherlands, where none are persecuted or hated for their faith. Answer: It is a free country, because it offers the freedom to do all manner of evil, but not to practice the true religion.

These words (although undoubtedly in no small part a rhetorical trope, a hyperbole) went to the heart of what was vexing Catholics in the Dutch Republic during the Golden Age. The problem was the unequal degree of freedom accorded to Catholics and Protestants, a result of which was the pervasive dissonance between declarations of religious toleration and actual social or legal practices that were discriminatory to Catholics. Despite the efforts of Catholic polemical writers like Van Geluwe, these problems would remain unresolved at least until the legal emancipation of Dutch Catholics in the 19th century.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Van Geluwe, *Kort verhael*, p. 10.

⁷⁸ The Roman Catholic diocesan hierarchy in the Netherlands was re-established in 1853. Kossman, *De Lage Landen*, vol. i, pp. 229-230.

**8. CASE STUDY:
A LITERARY NETWORK IN DELFT IN 1628.
JOANNES STALPART VAN DER WIELE
AND THE GOLDEN AGE OF CHRISTIANITY**

**8.1. THE DUTCH GOLDEN AGE:
LITERARY AND CULTURAL PARADIGMS**

Literary and pictorial discourses defined how the Dutch of the Golden Age perceived themselves. Yet before these discourses could enter the collective consciousness, tremendous changes had to take place in the Dutch Republic. The most formative years were, arguably, from the 1580s until the 1630s. In these decades new religious and ideological divisions emerged in Dutch society as a result of the conflict between the Remonstrants (moderate Reformers) and Counter-Remonstrants (strict Calvinists) within the Dutch Reformed Church. The events of this period, which shaped a climate of religious and political pluralism as well as of conflict and discord, were to have far-reaching consequences for the identity of the Dutch during their Golden Age, up until the Anglo-French invasion of the Year of Disaster (*Het Rampjaar*, 1672), and even later, until the fall of the Dutch Republic in 1795.

Notwithstanding the space of time that elapsed since the northern provinces had officially broken with the Roman Church, many traces of Roman Catholic culture remained in the consciousness of the non-Catholic Dutch. The Reformed Dutch retained, for example, the medieval Catholic tradition of collective charity, which now became the shared responsibility of the religious denominations and town governments. Also, there persisted, since the late Middle Ages, a deeply-felt need for intense personal piety and moral self-perfection. It was strongly stimulated, first by the Modern Devotion and by traditional meditative pious literature or religious confraternities, and later, in a different way, by Erasmus, whose writings had become accessible even to a non-Latinate public from the second quarter of the sixteenth century. During Dutch Golden Age a desire for greater religious

zeal and a concern with a renewal of public and private morals on the part of the strict Calvinists gave rise to a Pietist movement known as the Further Reformation (*Nadere Reformatie*).¹ Among the notable advocates of the Further Reformation at Delft were the *predikanten* Dionysius Spranckhuysen (1587-1650) and Volckerus van Oosterwyck (1602-1675) as well as their younger colleague at Utrecht, Jodocus van Lodenstein (1620-1677).²

On the other side of the intra-Protestant division in Dutch society, the religious thinking of the Dutch *politiques* leaned strongly towards religious irenism. In Grotius' apology for the ecclesiastical policies of Van Oldenbarnevelt, a certain nostalgia rings out for the Catholic Church. According to Grotius, Roman Catholic doctrine preserved 'at least some' truth, while relentless religious reforms were liable to entirely dismantle that essential core of beliefs.³ These were certainly not words a seventeenth-century Dutch Calvinist would have accepted. Some *politiques*, like the mathematician Simon Stevin, embraced the Reformed Church not for religious reasons but rather as a political entity that offered a set of moral guidelines essential to the proper functioning of civil society. These views Stevin expounded in the tract *Het Burgherlic Leven* (Lat. *De vita politica*, 1590), originally published in Delft and dedicated to the town's burgomaster, Govert Brasser.⁴ Even further away from the mainstream among the non-aligned Protestant Dutch was the artist and philosopher Dirk Volkertszoon Coornhert. Always a defender of an individual freedom of conscience,⁵ Coornhert did not join a Reformed congregation owing to reservations about Calvinist teaching on, for example, original sin and predestination.⁶ In ongoing polemics with

¹ Israel, *The Dutch Republic*, pp. 474-478.

² An invaluable resource on the history of the Reformed Church in Delft and environs during the Dutch Golden Age is Wouters, Abels, *Nieuw en ongezien: kerk en samenleving in de classis Delft en Delfland 1572-1621*. An older but still highly useful reference work about the first decades of the Reformed Church in Delft is Jaanus, *Hervormd Delft ten tijde van Arent Cornelisz*. For the social climate and literary networks of the Further Reformation at Delft see esp. Leurlijk, 'De Nadere Reformatie in Delft', pp. 137-169.

³ Grotius, *Der heeren Staten van Hollandt ende West-Vrieslandt godts-diensticheyt*, p. 120.

⁴ Stevin, *Vita Politica. Het Burgherlick Leven*, Middelburg: Jaques Fierens, 1658.

⁵ Coornhert, *Proces Vant Ketterdoden ende dwang der Conscientien. Tusschen Wolf-aardt Bisschop Advocaat van Theodore de Beza metten zynen daar voor/ ende Dirick Volckartsz. Coornhert daar teghen sprekende. Tweede deel Kerckelijck. [...]* Gouda: Jasper Tournay, 1590.

⁶ Coornhert, *Van de erfzonde: Disputatie Tusschen de Predicanten tot Haarlem / ende D.V. Coornhert*. Gouda, Jasper Tournay, 1610.

the Delft ministers Thomas van Til, Arent Cornelisz Croese and Reynier Donteclock, Coornhert defended the individual's right to contest the new official orthodoxy championed by the Calvinist *predikanten*.⁷ Coornhert believed that individuals had an absolute and autonomous freedom to choose what is good and reject what is bad, a conviction which he expressed in the moral treatise *Zede-kunst* (1585).⁸

Meanwhile, a practical Christian ethics which looked back to Erasmus served as the mainstay of many writers and intellectuals of the Golden Age. Grotius, for instance, expressed the belief that the Dutch owed most of their theological ideas not to Calvin but to the Rotterdammer, whose writings were widely studied in the Low Countries and enjoyed much prestige.⁹ These views were shared by others, for instance the philosopher and merchant Hendrick Laurenszoon Spiegel or the poet-historian Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft. Spiegel authored the ethical treatise *Hart-spiegel* (1614), a work strongly tinged by the ideas of Erasmus and by Renaissance neo-Stoicism. There he emphasized the need for personal introspection, moderation, and moral self-improvement by reining in the passions as a means of achieving the *summum bonum* of a virtuous life.

The shared cultural foundations of the Golden Age Dutch elites went back to the Christian and Graeco-Roman ethical ideals of their predecessors in medieval and Renaissance Europe. These ideals certainly could serve as a common language for educated individuals on every side of the religious divide, uniting Dutch Protestants, Remonstrants as well as Counter-Remonstrants, and Catholics. It was thanks to this common language of ethical aspirations, cultural themes and literary *topoi* that Dutch poets, writers and intellectuals of opposing confessional-political backgrounds could communicate with one another. This common cultural heritage was essential whenever an intellectual wished to bridge the faultlines of the political and religious conflicts that so deeply divided Dutch society in the first decades of the 17th century.

If the Dutch literature of the Golden Age can be any measure of social attitudes, then we can say that among its makers and among its audience there existed a deeply-felt need for texts offering ethical guidance in times of uncertainty and change. To this need Protestant and

⁷ Coornhert, *Vande toelatinghe ende decreete Godts: bedenckinge of de H. Schrift oock inhoudt, sulcx als mr. Johan Calvijn ende T. Beza daer van leeren [...] berispinghe daer over van Reynier Donteclock ende de antwoorde daer op van D.V. Coornhert, vermaninghe aen R. Donteclock [...]*. Gouda: Jasper Tournay, 1610.

⁸ Coornhert, *Zedekunst, dat is wellevenskunste*.

⁹ Grotius, *Verantwoordingh van de Wettelijcke Regieringh van Hollandt*, p. 29.

Catholic authors responded with texts that transmitted essential Christian concepts filtered through the Graeco-Roman canon of literature and philosophy. At the same time Protestants and Catholics engaged in a renewed dialogue with the literature and culture of Renaissance Europe. This international dimension of Dutch intellectual life had a powerful impact on the identities of the cultural elites in the northern Netherlands whose worldview crystallized in the final decades of the 16th and early 17th century.¹⁰

8.2. THE GOLDEN AGE AS A MOTIF OF SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DUTCH LITERATURE

One of the many literary motifs which were conducive to carrying on a dialogue of the present with the past in the seventeenth-century Netherlands was the myth of the Golden Age. The classical Golden Age, a concept derived from the 'Four Ages of Mankind' came down to Dutch humanists through their reading in classical literature. Karel van Mander, author of the *Schilder-boeck*, writing around 1600, mentioned Hesiod and Virgil's *Fourth Eclogue* as his sources of this motif.¹¹ Another frequent source of information about the Golden Age were Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Quickly, the classical Golden Age became a simile and an analogy for the peace and affluence of the contemporary Netherlands. In a sonnet that is perfectly Ovidian in its poetic vision of nature transformed and transforming itself, Joost van den Vondel congratulated the property developer Karel Looten on his landed estate in the newly-reclaimed Beemster polder by comparing its pleasures and pastimes to the Golden Age:

Hier lacht de goude tijt, in lieve lustprieelen,
Die voor geen oorlogh schrickt, noch kiel op klippen stuurt.¹²

*Here in lovely pleasure gardens delights the Golden Age // That needs to fear
no war or maritime disaster.*

¹⁰ This international dimension is rightly appreciated as one of the main characteristics of the literary paradigm of seventeenth-century literature by Schenkeveld-Van der Dussen, *Dutch Literature in the Age of Rembrandt*, pp. 137-152.

¹¹ Van Mander, *Schilder-boeck*, fol. 8v.

¹² For the Ovidian themes in Vondel's sonnet see Gelderblom, 'Dichter bij een droogmakerij', pp. 104-118. The text of this poem is cited after Gelderblom's article (*ibid.*, p. 104).

Where the myth of the Golden Age opened itself to (re-)interpretation, the Dutch authors of the 17th century made good use of this quality. The Calvinist poet Jan van der Veen, for instance, expressed a wish that the Dutch might possess the heroic virtues of nobility and valor whose return in the new Golden Age was foretold in the Fourth Eclogue. Through the figure of a lion which, in turn, as the *Leo Belgicus*, was associated with the Netherlands, Van der Veen transferred these virtues to the Dutch:

‘t is waer dat wy als nu een ysren eeuw beleeven,
 Gelijk ‘et blijkt, maer ’t schijnt als dat de gulden eeuw,
 Ons vrye Vader-landt tot Na-laet heeft gegeven,
 Te sijn mewarich, vroet en moedich als de Leeuw.¹³

Truly we are now living in an Age of Iron, but it appears that the Golden Age bestowed on our free Fatherland the mission to be benign, brave and valiant like the lion.

These were not the only literary manifestations of the theme of the Golden Age. It was perhaps no coincidence that Delft, a town that in the previous century had produced a harmonious union of Christian religious faith and humanistic scholarship, now became the setting for a re-interpretation of the myth of the Golden Age that combined the concerns of the contemporary Dutch humanist elites with not a Protestant but a Roman Catholic vision of the history of mankind. This vision was advanced by Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele (1579-1630), a priest born in The Hague who had found a home and a parish in Delft.

8.3. PRIESTS AND MISSIONARIES IN THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES AND LITERARY NETWORKS OF DELFT: JOANNES STALPART VAN DER WIELE AND LUDOVICUS MAKEBLIJDE

The choice faced by the Catholics in the Northern Netherlands during the Dutch Golden Age was by no means an easy one. Yet despite obvious hardships a considerable number of priests in the *Missio Hollandica* exercised their vocation with considerable self-sacrifice, while trying to persuade the doubters and the hesitant, as one song put it, to ‘discern between one

¹³ Van der Veen, *Zinne-beelden oft Adams Appel*, p. 8.

word and the other' ('onderscheydt dan mede / Eens tusschen woord en woord').¹⁴ One of these priests was Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele: a humanist poet and scholarly apologist who created one of Delft's most important religious literary networks of the first quarter of the 17th century.¹⁵

Stalpart van der Wiele grew up in a well-to-do family of patricians who remained true to the Roman Catholic religion through the time of the Dutch Revolt. As a boy and young man he would have known Sasbout Vosmeer, the Delft-based Apostolic Vicar of the Netherlands. Stalpart van der Wiele was most probably in attendance when Vosmeer celebrated Mass in The Hague. Stalpart van der Wiele's father was a lawyer at the Holland judicial court (*Hof van Holland*). Since it was only natural that a lawyer's son should pursue the same career, at the age of thirteen Joannes was sent to Louvain, to study for a degree in the *artes liberales*. While studying at Louvain he received the tonsure which was the first step towards the priesthood; apparently this happened without the consent or knowledge of his parents.¹⁶

Stalpart van der Wiele was prevented from studying further at Louvain in 1595, after the States of Holland issued a proclamation prohibiting the Dutch from visiting any university in the lands administered by the crown of Spain. Stalpart then enrolled at Leiden, but such a strictly Protestant university was not the most favorable choice for a Dutch Catholic. In 1598 he completed his studies at Orléans, a university visited by many students from the Low Countries (several years later, one of the greatest 17th century Dutch poets, Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft, would study there). Other famous graduates from the class of 1598 included Jacob Cats, the later Grand Pensionary, poet and emblem-writer, and Hugo Grotius. In the same year Stalpart was sworn in as a lawyer for the Judiciary and High Council of Holland (*Hoge Raad*).¹⁷

In the late 1590s Stalpart van der Wiele reached a spiritual turning-point in his life in which he decided to abandon the unsatisfying life of an attorney. He responded to the calling which he had felt all those years by going in 1602 to Louvain, this time to study theology.¹⁸ His professors

¹⁴ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*, p. 1054.

¹⁵ For a comprehensive biography of Stalpart van der Wiele see esp. Mensink, *Jan Baptist Stalpart van der Wiele*; see also Van der Heijden, 'Inleiding' in Stalpart van der Wiele, *Madrigalia*, pp. 1-12; the most recent biography is by Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, pp. 11-20.

¹⁶ Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 11.

¹⁷ Van Leeuwen, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

included Jacobus Jansonius (1547-1625) and most probably the classicist Justus Lipsius (1547-1606), who had only recently returned from Leiden. In the years that Stalpart stayed at Louvain, the university was home to priests whom he would later meet in Holland: Rumoldus van Medenblick, later to become priest in Leiden (and his confessor) and Joost Boudewijnszoon Cats, the later parish priest of Haarlem. There were many others, for example Justus de Harduwijn (1582-1636), the Flemish priest, Petrarchist poet and author of religious emblems. Another contemporary was Cornelis Jansenius (1585-1638), the theologian who became responsible for the doctrine of Jansenism that provoked a schism within the Catholic Church in the Netherlands in the late 17th century.¹⁹

Bentivoglio mentioned in his *Verhael...* that novices were often sent to continue their studies at the university of Louvain. After graduating, and after ordination, the priests sometimes 'returned to the [United] Provinces to plant the Catholic faith there' ('[...] werden van tijd tot tijd gesonden in die Provincien, om het lant te stichten met het Catholijksche geloove in die gewesten').²⁰ During the Louvain period (until his ordination to the priesthood in 1606) it seemed likely that Stalpart van der Wiele would follow the educational pattern described by Bentivoglio. Louvain was an important way-stage in the life of would-be Holland missionaries such as Rumoldus van Medenblick and Joost Cats. And yet Stalpart van der Wiele did not return to the northern Netherlands immediately upon finishing his theological studies, but journeyed onwards through Brabant, France and Italy to Rome. This journey probably took him two or three years, for his presence in Rome is documented since 1609.²¹

Perhaps Stalpart van der Wiele was aware that his mission in Holland needed time to mature through prolonged contact with the sources of the Catholic faith. In Rome he encountered a vibrant religious life, starting with the priestly community of Juan Baptista Vives (1542-1632), the *Congregatio sancti Petri de propaganda fide* ('St. Peter's congregation for propagating the faith').²² Vives, a Spanish priest at whose home Stalpart lodged, was well-connected to the Roman curia. The priestly community

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Bentivoglio, *Verhael van de Vereenigde Provincien...*, p. 256.

²¹ Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 13.

²² Vives' congregation was a free priestly community, later subsumed into the Collegio Urbano. It should not be confused with the similarly named, but later *Congregatio de propaganda fidei* established by Pope Gregory XV in 1622 (cf. Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 13).

headed by Vives was established in the tradition of the oratory of St. Philip Neri (1515-1595). The activities of the congregation strengthened the daily devotion and nurtured the faith of its members through acts of charity as well as through learning. The informal curriculum included studying the Holy Scripture and Church history, and perfecting musical skills through the practice of chorals and polyphonic motets.²³

When Stalpart van der Wiele departed from Rome for the Dutch Republic in 1611 he left behind a world of Renaissance learning and culture which, despite the physical distance, would continue to have a deep impact on his activities as a priest in his native country. News of the young man's piety and scholarly abilities reached Vosmeer and other fellow-priests in the Apostolic Vicariate of Holland. In a letter to Vosmeer (cited in H. van Rijn's *Oudheden van Delft en Delfland*), one of the Apostolic Vicar's secretaries wrote, with a characteristic understatement: 'I quite believe Stalpart may be somewhat out of the ordinary, seeing his zeal or considering his thorough education'. In yet another letter Vosmeer complemented Stalpart van der Wiele on his homilies, his 'elegant and fine style of writing' and 'exceptional virtues'.²⁴ On 8 October 1612, Vosmeer assigned Stalpart to the position of parish priest in Delft, as the successor of Bernardus van Steenwijk. Delft was a nearby town that the young priest already knew well. The fact that Stalpart van der Wiele's family had ties to some of the leading patrician families of Delft offered a guarantee of avoiding judicial persecution.²⁵

The Catholic clergy in early seventeenth-century Holland belonged (as to this day in the Catholic Church), to two categories: the secular clergy (diocesan priests) whom Bentivoglio called *Wereltlijcke Priesters*, and priests who were the members of a religious order (clerks regular or *Gewijde Priesters*). According to Bentivoglio in the first decades of the 17th century the diocesan priests in the Dutch Republic vastly outnumbered the clerks regular (in this number were especially Jesuits, but also representatives of other orders).²⁶ Sometimes misunderstandings arose

²³ Van Leeuwen, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

²⁴ 'Terwijl [Stalpart van der Wielen] te Romen was / heeft de Graaf, Sasbouts zaak-bezorger / onder anderen aan gemelden Sasbout geschreven: 'My dunkt dat ik in Stalpard [sic] iet meer als gemeens zie uyttschijnen; 't zy dat men zijnen yver beziet; 't zy dat men acht geeft op zijne veelvuldige geleerdheit'. In een anderen brief aan den voornoemden Prelaat prijst hy Stalpard over zijne begaafdheid in 't preeken / over zijn netten en bevalligen stijl in 't schrijven / en over zijne uytnemende deugden'. In: Van Heussen, Van Rijn (transl.), *Oudheden en gestichten van Delft en Delfland*, pp. 131-132.

²⁵ Kok, 'Het katholiek leven binnen de stad Delft', p. 109.

²⁶ Bentivoglio, *Verhael van de Vereenigde Provincien...*, pp. 254-255.

between the diocesan priests and the clerks regular who answered not to the diocesan bishop but to the superior of their religious order:

De Priesteren hebben noyt soo geerne gesien, als sy wel behoorden, dat de Gewijde neffens haer quamen; ende hebben daer over op verscheyde tijden klachtig gevallen, dat sy haer te veel aen-namen in de verrichtinge van de Geestelijcke saecken; gelijk als in tegendeel de Gewijde, dat haer verscheyde tegen-spreckinge gedaen wierden van de Priesteren.²⁷

The secular priests did not look as favorably as they should have on the company of the clerks regular, and they often voiced their complaint that [the clerks regular] interfered too much in spiritual matters; conversely, the clerks regular [complained that] the secular priests laid various obstacles in their path.

The situation that Stalpart van der Wiele, a new secular parish priest, encountered in Delft, conformed to Bentivoglio's description, as the relations between the secular priests and the only Jesuit, Ludovicus Makebljide (1565-1630), who came to Delft from the southern Netherlands in 1611, were rather distant.²⁸

Although the somewhat haphazard organization of the *Missio Hollandica* was partly to blame for the conflicts between diocesan priests and Jesuits, this should not obscure the similarities between the representatives of both groups on a personal level. In Delft, for instance, Ludovicus Makebljide came from an upper-class social background, was a humanist man-of-letters and shared the same aspirations of the post-Tridentine reform movement in the Church as Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele. Makebljide was born in Poperinge as the son of a mayor, read philosophy at Douai and joined the Order of the Jesuits in 1586. Before being ordained in 1588 he studied Greek and Latin philology at Saint-Omer, and afterwards, between 1595 and 1599, theology at Louvain. During the early 1600s he served as a pastor in Winoksbergen, Ypres, Antwerp, Scherpenheuvel and Ghent.²⁹

In Delft Makebljide proved to be an energetic priest who tried to draw everyone closer to God through devotion and reasoned debate. Contemporaries registered his talents in the direction of evangelizing the laity, converting individuals and entire families (often several in one

²⁷ Bentivoglio, *op. cit.* p. 257.

²⁸ Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 16. A detailed account of the conflict between clerks regular and secular priests during the vicariate of Sasbout Vosmeer can be found in Van Heussen, *Batavia sacra* [Dutch transl.], vol. iii, pp. 203-204.

²⁹ Derks, 'Makebljide (Lodewijk)' in: *NNBW*, vol. iii, pp. 812-813.

year) to the Church.³⁰ One of his encounters with a Delft sheriff (*schout*) who persecuted Catholic priests was preserved in the historical literature of the Jesuit order. The narrative of this event demonstrated not only the risk involved in such contacts but also the determination of Makeblijde to persuade non-Catholics that the salvation of the soul went above all other things:

P[ater] Ludovicus Makeblijde was gevanghen van eenen sekeren Schout, den welcken datelijck soo heeft beginnen te raesen dat de medecijnen alle hope van sijn leven verloren gaven. Makeblijde by hem gheleydt zijnde, heeft met groote vyerigheyt Godt voor sijne ghesontheit ghebeden, ende siet hy heeft se datelijck bekomen. Dan heeft P[ater] Makeblijde hem aenghegaen om te sien of hy hem kost brenghen tot het waere licht des gheloofs, segghende onder andere, dat de ghene die in 't schip vanden H. Petrus niet en was, niet en kost saligh worden: Den Schout heeft hier-mede ghelachen ende spots-gewijs gheseyt: Dat schip is veel te out, ende daer sou perijckel zijn van te verdrincken indien het my voerde (want hy was soo groot ende grof van lichaem, dat twee-en-twintigh mannen hem moesten draghen als hy nu doodt was)[.] Godt heeft sijne spottinghe ghehoort, want dry daghen daer naer, wel te pas ende sterck, sonder eenigh teeken van sieckte, is hy gestorvern met dobbele schipbraeke en van sijn lichaem, en van sijne ziele.³¹

Father Ludovicus Makeblijde was arrested once by a certain sheriff who fell into such a fit of madness that the doctors lost all hope of saving his life. When Makeblijde was brought before the sheriff, he prayed with great devotion for his health, and behold, the man was healthy again. Then Father Makeblijde visited him to see whether he could convert him to the true light of faith, saying among other things that those who were not in the boat of St. Peter could not be saved; the sheriff mocked those words and laughed, 'That ship is so old that it would surely drown if I were on board' (for he was so heavy and stout of limb that twenty-two men had to carry his coffin when he died). God had heard his mockery for three days later, although he had been strong and fit, he passed away without any sign of disease, perishing in the double shipwreck of his body and soul.

Situations such as those experienced by Makeblijde were a staple of Stalpart van der Wiele's priestly activities. But before Stalpart could commence his work in Delft, he first had to obtain proper accommodation, for the rooms in the Bagijnhof that he was to have occupied as parish priest had already been taken by another diocesan priest, Suitbertus Purmerent (1587-1650), who was living in Delft. Financial issues were

³⁰ Mensink, *Jan Baptist Stalpart van der Wiele*, pp. 153-155.

³¹ Hazart, *Kerckelycke historie van de gheheele wereldt*, vol. iii, pp. 262-263.

a source of additional worry. Purmerent's income from the collect did not leave much over for his new colleague. However, with much diplomacy, and no doubt with just as much or even more prayer and patience, Stalpart managed to resolve the thorniest issues. After lodging for some time until 1616 with friendly Catholics, such as Jan Arentsen and Jan Claessen Reijnboom, brewers in the house under 'de Verkeerde Weerelt' ('The World Turned Upside-Down') in the Brabantse Turfmarkt,³² he eventually found a roof above his head in the Bagijnhof as well as a steady income.

Bentivoglio's hopeful conclusion as regards parochial relations was that secular priests and clerks regular '[...] now live in harmony with one another, and the differences have been amicably laid aside, for it was through such methods [i.e. discord] that the heretics did more harm to our cause than by the weapon of their own hostile convictions' ('[...] sy leven tegenwoordiglijk in eendracht te samen, zijnde op goede voet de voorgaende verschillen onder haer by geleydt, door welcker middel, somwijlen de Ketters grooter stijdt gevoert hebben tegens onse saecke, als met de wapenen van haer eygen vyandtlijcke gesinthen'³³). This conclusion applied to that chapter of Stalpart's life in Delft and his relations with Makeblijde. As men of a studious nature, pious Catholics and learned Renaissance humanists, Makeblijde and Stalpart recognized that there was much reason to lay aside personal ambition when the faith was in danger, as it certainly was in the early 1620s, when in the wake of the Oldenbarnevelt trial and after the resumption of hostilities with Spain, the States General issued new placards against 'the malicious and murderous sect of the Jesuits, priests, monks and any other religious persons belonging to the Roman religion' ('de schadelicke ende moordadige Secte van Iesuiten ende andere Priesters, Monicken ende geseeyde Geestelicken of Religieuse Persoonen van de Roomsche Religie Sijnde').³⁴

Even though weak of health, Stalpart van der Wiele continued his pastoral work with great dedication. During a plague epidemic that ravaged Delft in 1624 he spared no effort to bring spiritual assistance to the sick and dying. At that time Stalpart van der Wiele's activities came to the attention of the municipal authorities. After the crackdown on Remonstrants,

³² Kok, 'Het katholiek leven binnen de stad Delft', p. 110.

³³ Bentivoglio, *Verhael van de Vereenigde Provinciën...*, p. 257.

³⁴ Kok, 'Het katholiek leven binnen de stad Delft', pp. 110-111. Other researchers have given more prominence to the conflict between the Jesuits and the diocesan priests, which caused the relations between Makeblijde and Stalpart van der Wiele to become more distant, see Mensink, *Jan Baptist Stalpart van der Wiele*, pp. 136-137.

the new authorities were less disposed to tolerate Catholics. As a result the priest was arrested and spent some time in custody. Around that time he was already responsible for a large parish, centered on Delft, which covered nearby villages such as Rijswijk, Voorburg, Wassenaar, Wateringen, Monster and Maasland. Stalpart van der Wiele's nomination in 1613 as *archipresbiter* (*aartspriester*) of Delft, Rotterdam and Schiedam³⁵ meant that he had to travel even longer distances to be with his flock. His journeys took him as far afield as the Nieuwe Maas and the island of Putten located between Holland and Zeeland. On trips to visit friends Stalpart van der Wiele travelled to The Hague and Leiden, where he also celebrated the Eucharist. Some Sundays saw congregations of two to three hundred people attending.³⁶ Through his personal piety and inspired homilies Stalpart helped to bring large numbers of former Catholics back to the Church. According to one contemporary source, Stalpart van der Wiele 'was moved himself, and touched his listeners so deeply that not a man left the church with a dry eye' ('soo grooten bewegen in hemzelve ende aen zijn toehoorders, dat men zelden met drogen ooghen uwt de kercke ghinck').³⁷

In 1621 Makeblijde became head of the Jesuit mission to Holland, a responsibility that came to weigh heavily on him, mainly because of arguments around the organization of the mission. A settlement between the Jesuit order and Sasbout Vosmeer's successor, the new Vicar Apostolic Philippus Rovenius (1624), provided a temporary solution.³⁸ In those years the Jesuit station in Delft continued to grow; a second Jesuit father, Roelant de Pottere, joined the station in 1621.³⁹ According to a report by Makeblijde around 1621-1622 there were approximately 2000 practicing Catholics (communicants) attached to the Jesuit station in Delft alone.⁴⁰ Around the year 1625 the Jesuits obtained a house and with it the space to build a clandestine church in the Oude Langendijk.⁴¹

³⁵ Cf. Van Boheemen, 'Inleiding' in: Stalpart van der Wiele, *Madrigalia*, p. 9.

³⁶ Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 16.

³⁷ Wilhelmina de Reeck, 'De liefde ende patientie Christi', this passage cited after Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, p. 333.

³⁸ Derks, 'Makeblijde (Lodewijk)', vol. iii, pp. 811-812.

³⁹ For the role of Jesuits as missionaries in Delft and environs see Van den Akker, 'Katholieke pastorale zorg voor het Westland in de zeventiende eeuw', pp. 16-19.

⁴⁰ Mensink, *Jan Baptist Stalpart van der Wiele*, pp. 84-85. For Makeblijde's evangelizing activities from the point of view of fellow Jesuits see also Begheyn, 'The pastoral journeys of the Dutch Jesuit Roelant de Pottere (1584-1675) in Delft and environs', pp. 187-208.

⁴¹ Wijbenga, *Delft*, vol. ii, p. 159.

Stalpart van der Wiele acted as chaplain to a group of spiritual virgins from Delft. These included the beguines and nuns living in the Bagijnhof, whose monasteries had been dissolved by the authorities. Spiritual virgins also included lay women from the parish, the so-called *kloppen* or *klopjes*, called so because they knocked (*kloppen*) on the doors of Catholic houses to call families to Mass. Such devoted women, both lay and religious, formed the mainstay of the clandestine Catholic Church in the northern provinces of the Netherlands. A town official in Gouda, for instance, conceded that the unflinching *kloppen* did '[...] more harm to the [Reformed] religion and to the land [i.e. the Calvinist government of the Dutch Republic] than all the priests combined' ('[...] meer schade den lande ende de religie doen als alle de paepen').⁴² Stalpart van der Wiele ran a school of catechesis for the *kloppen*, many of whom were involved in teaching children the basics of religion, and out of those women he formed a choir which performed religious songs, many of which he had written.⁴³

A Catholic from Voorhout near The Hague, Hendrik Duijst, referred to Stalpart van der Wiele, humorously, with a pun on his name, as a 'brave horse harnessed to the wheels' of the Catholic parish of Delft and neighboring towns ('Spant in het Stalpaert voor de wyelen cloeckmoedich').⁴⁴ By the late 1620's, as the burden of labor was taking its toll, Stalpart's health was failing him. Coincidentally, Ludovicus Makeblijde and Stalpart van der Wiele died within several months of each other, the former on 17 August, in Delft, and the latter on 29 December, 1630, surrounded by his friends and cared for by the *klopjes* at the Bagijnhof.

As Hugo Franciscus van Heussen, the chronicler of Catholic Holland, recalled some eighty years later, Stalpart even composed the songs that were sung at his own funeral ('Hy had zijn eigen uytvaart in rijm opgesteld').⁴⁵ Stalpart's biography, written soon after his death by one of the *klopjes*, Wilhelmina de Reeck, and co-authored by Stalpart's Leiden friend, the priest Rumoldus van Medenblick, is a moving testimonial to the sense that contemporary Catholics had of Stalpart as an exemplary pious priest and devoted servant of God.⁴⁶

⁴² Van Deursen, *Mensen van klein vermogen*, p. 318.

⁴³ Kok, 'Het katholiek leven binnen de stad Delft', p. 110.

⁴⁴ Entry from April 27, 1611 in Stalpart's 'Album amicorum', cited by Kok, 'Het katholiek leven binnen de stad Delft', p. 108.

⁴⁵ Van Heussen, Van Rijn, *Oudheden en gestichten van Delft...*, p. 133.

⁴⁶ Wilhelmina de Reeck, 'De liefde ende patiencie Christi' in: Mensink, *Jan Baptist Stalpart van der Wiele*, pp. 192-220.

8.4. THE CONTINUITY OF CATHOLIC LITERARY NETWORKS IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DELFT

Working in the cultural networks of seventeenth-century Delft, Ludovicus Makeblijde and Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele created a religious literature that stimulated the Catholic identity of their parishioners as well as that of other Roman Catholics in the Netherlands. Yet although the activities of both these priests in Delft coincided chronologically, in the context of Catholic literary life at Delft the name of Makeblijde is only seldom mentioned.⁴⁷ One reason for this can be that the smaller literary output of Makeblijde has not interested scholars quite as much the considerably more extensive and diverse *oeuvre* of Stalpart van der Wiele.⁴⁸ Another reason that can be mentioned is the seeming dichotomy within Delft's Catholic community that produced rivalries between a diocesan parish and a Jesuit mission. Yet although the parish in the Bagijnhof and the Jesuit mission in the Oude Langendijk catered to different groups of Catholic faithful, there is all the more reason to seek a broad perspective that would capture the literary activities of the priests and laity in each of these two sub-groups of the same community. If one's perspective changes from a fragmentary picture of individual authors to a wider view of Catholic literary networks and their interactions, then, as we will try to prove, it should become clear that the Catholic literary landscape of Delft (but also of the Netherlands) owed its essential identity to the work of both these Catholic priests, humanists and men-of-letters and their respective audiences.

⁴⁷ Makeblijde is not mentioned at all as an author of religious literature living in Delft by Van Boheemen and Van der Heijden, 'Literatuur en toneel te Delft (1572-1667)', pp. 242-252 or by Wijbenga, *Delft*, vol. ii, pp. 148-149 (in a chapter dedicated to Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele and to Catholic religious literature).

⁴⁸ There is no modern biography of Makeblijde comparable to Mensink's biography of Stalpart van der Wiele. For basic biographic information on Makeblijde see further Cartens, 'Lodewijk Makeblijde: een dichter der contra-reformatie', pp. 527-533; Loosen, 'Lodewijk Makeblijde', pp. 55-59. Makeblijde's religious songs are the subject of only one edition, Loosen (ed.), *Lodewijk Makeblijde, (1565-1630): hymnen en gezangen*; see also Kuyper, 'Enige kanttekeningen bij de Hymnen en Gezangen van Lodewijk Makeblijde', pp. 140-142; A recent inquiry into Makeblijde's songbook is Begheyn, 'Lodewijk Makeblijde, S.J., "Den berch der gheestelicker vreughden" (1618)', pp. 33-35; on the relation of Makeblijde to other religious poets, Cornelius Musius and the Calvinist Jacobus Revius, see Strenghtolt, 'Een hardnekkig misverstand', pp. 486-489 and Dekker, 'Revius-Makeblijde-Musius', pp. 494-498.

Makeblijde, a prolific writer of works of practical theology, was best-known in the northern, and most especially, the southern Netherlands as the author of the popular Mechelen Catechism. This frequently-republished work was entitled *Catechi[smus] dat is De christeliicke leeringhe ghedeylt in neghen-en-viertich lessen* ('The Catechism or Christian teaching divided into forty-nine lessons'). Commissioned by the provincial *concilium* of Mechelen in 1607,⁴⁹ it was published by Joachim Trognenius at Antwerp (1609). There is reason to believe, after C. Parker, that 'the catechism in use depended on whether a religious or secular pastor operated the station'.⁵⁰ But for a long time there was no alternative to Makeblijde's Mechelen Catechism. It was only a decade later that a new catechism was written on the urging of Philippus Rovenius by the diocesan priest Joannes Bugge (under the pseudonym Christian van den Berghe) – the *Catholyke Catechismus of Kort Onderwys van de Christelyke Leeringe* ('s Hertogenbosch: Jan Scheffer [III], 1622). Even then, this new diocesan catechism did not differ in structure or content from Makeblijde's, but merely 'contained a much more extensive section on heresy and possessed a sharper polemical tone' than its Jesuit equivalent.⁵¹

Alongside the Mechelen Catechism, Makeblijde also wrote a commentary, *Den schat der christelicker leeringhe tot verklaringhe van den catechismus* ('The treasure of Christian learning to elucidate the catechism', 1610), and a series of devotional tracts and works of practical theology. These included spiritual exercises for Catholics based on the meditations of St. Ignatius Loyola,⁵² a handbook for making a good confession,⁵³ a book relating the martyrdom of Catholic missionaries in Japan,⁵⁴ a manual on a virtuous Christian life.⁵⁵ A few years later Makeblijde wrote a Catholic song-book, *Den berch der gheestelicker vreughden*,

⁴⁹ Derks, 'Makeblijde (Lodewijk)' in: *NNBW*, vol. iii, p. 812.

⁵⁰ Parker, *Faith on the margins*, pp. 143-144.

⁵¹ Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 143.

⁵² Makeblijde, *Den lvt-hof der gheestelicke oeffeninghen*. Antwerp: Hieronymus Verdussen, 1609.

⁵³ Makeblijde, *Maniere om een generale biechte te doen*. Antwerp: Hieronymus Verdussen, 1609.

⁵⁴ Makeblijde (transl.), *Nieuwe ende vvaerachtighe historie van ses glorieuse martelaers die in Iaponien voor het catholijck ghelooue ghedoot zijn in 'tiaer 1604. Seer schoone ende bequame / om alle wanckelbare menschen in het Catholijck gheloove te verstercken. Overgheset uyt het Francoysche in Nederlandtsche, door Pater Ludovicus Makeblyde, Priester der Societeyt Iesu*. Antwerp: Hieronymus Verdussen, 1609.

⁵⁵ Makeblijde, *Konste om sekerlick de volmaecktheyt der deughden te verkriighen*. Antwerp, Joachim Trognenius, 1611.

vol hemelsche hoven ende melodieuze lof-sangen ('The mountain of spiritual joys, full of heavenly courts and melodious hymns')⁵⁶ and a collection of songs, prayers and meditations, *Den hemelschen handel der devote zielen* ('The heavenly doings of pious souls').⁵⁷ Makeblijde explained that his goal was to nourish the readers' weakened faith by cultivating their aesthetic delight in religious music and song, and by stimulating a culture of prayer and interiorized meditation:

[...] om den gheest (die door het gebruyck der sinnelijcker lusten, sich niet ghenoech tot Godt begheven en can) door het aen-vatten deser gheestelijcker wellusten, het aenschouwen van dese Princelijcke hoven, ende het gebruyck der lof-sangen ende ghebeden soo te vercloecken, dat hy in alle oefeninghen der deughden mach aen nemen, ende met ghestadicheyt blijven.⁵⁸

[...] to fortify the soul (which, being in thrall to the passions, is unable to turn to God) by the sight of these spiritual joys, the vision of these princely courts, and the singing of hymns as well as by saying the prayers, so that it will take up the practice of virtue and remain constant in it.

The content of this volume was a mixture of familiar and innovative themes. On the one hand, *Den hemelschen handel der devote zielen* offered the reader meditations for every day of the week structured like a traditional book of hours. On the other hand, in the tradition of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola, Makeblijde pursued the theme that the richness of the human imagination was indispensable for the contemplation of spiritual things. In a series of parables he attended lay readers to the unending variety of such an imaginative religious meditation:

Ghelijck een constich schilder, die een peerdt, dat in alles volmaect ende wonderlijck schoon is, schildert, nu van voren, nu van achter, nu van ter zijden, nu staende, nu gaende, nu springhenden, altijd nieuwe verwonderinghe heeft in de proportie sijnder leden ende coleuren, ende andere vermakelijckheyt in het schilderen: oft ghelijck eenen, die uyt lust gaet wandelen langhs eenigen vloedt, andere vreught heeft dien siende spruyten uyt de aerde in't besluit sinder fonteyne; andere, siende dien vallen van eenen berch na het leeghte; andere, siende dien selven vloedt draeyen rondtom de heuvelen des berchs; andere siende dien vloeyen tusschen de groene boomen, hagen ende bebloemde velden: Soo gheschiet het oock hier den contemplerder, die (als

⁵⁶ Makeblijde, *Den berch der gheestelicker vrevghden, vol hemelsche hoven ende melodieuze lof-sangen*. Antwerp: Hieronymus Verdussen, 1618.

⁵⁷ Makeblijde, *Den hemelschen handel der devote zielen, vol gheestelijcke meditatie, ghetijden, lof-sanghen, ende ghebeden*. Antwerp: Jan Cnobbaert, 1625.

⁵⁸ Makeblijde, *Den hemelschen handel der devote zielen*, fol. [*** 5 r] – [*** 6 v].

eenen schilder, in de panneelen der crachten sijnder ziele, verstandt, memorie ende wille, de dinghen, die hy aendachtelijck overlegt, schildert ende indruckt: oft als eenen, die hem in eenighe fonteyne ende verscheyden loop sijnder wateren verheught) na den gheest anderen lust heeft in Goddelijcke dinghen, contemplerende in Godt als in haer fonteyne; anderen uyt Godt vloeyende nederwaerts in sijne creaturen; anderen siende die draeyen rontsom de hooveerdighe ende versteende menschen, die Godts goedertierene mildtheyt verachten; ende anderen bemerckende die de ootmoetighe herten vervullen ende vruchtbaer maken; eyndelijck anderen de selve aenschouwende, door-lopen de lieflijcke velden des hemels, ende alle Godts Heylighen met glorie ende salicheydt verrijcken.⁵⁹

An artful painter, who paints a horse that is perfect and fair of limb, now from the front, now from behind, now sideways, standing or going, or jumping, always finds delight in the proportions of the horse's limbs and its color, and pleasure in painting the same; a man who goes out walking next to a stream feels a different kind of pleasure when he sees it emerge from the ground in the form of a well-spring, and a different pleasure when he sees it falling from a mountain cliff into the void, twisting around a mountain or flowing between the green trees, hedges and flowery fields; similar to these is the experience of the contemplative man who (like a painter on a panel, painting and impressing in the forces of his soul, mind and will, the things that he meditates upon; or like the one who delights differently in a well-spring and the changing nature of a stream), spiritually finds a different enjoyment in divine things, when he contemplates God as a well-spring, or when he sees the grace of God flowing down into His creatures; or when he sees it meandering around the stony indifference of proud people who reject God's merciful mildness; or when he sees it filling and nourishing humble hearts; finally, seeing the latter walking across the heavenly fields, united in glory and holiness with all God's saints.

In a dedicatory poem opening *Den hemelschen handel der devote zielen* an anonymous author (signed as I.W.) advertised Makeblijde's hymns as the best medicine against sloth (*acedia*) and other moral vices:

T'Vergift is veelderley, het teghen-gift niet minder,
Bequaem te weiren af des lichaems quael en hinder,
Den bolus groot nut werckt, den bezar-steen gheeft baet,
Heilsaem den eenhoorn is, heilsaem het mithridaet
Tot lijffs behoudenis: maer sangh gaet al te boven
Wat ons comt over zee, oft wacht in onse hoven [...] ⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Makeblijde, *op. cit.*, fol. [*** 6 r] – [*** 7 v].

⁶⁰ Makeblijde, *op. cit.*, fol. [*** 8 r].

The poison is manifold, the antidotes no less numerous, // Capable of defending the body against all illness and discomfort, // The bolus is useful, the bezoar stone provides relief // The unicorn's horn and mithridate are potent remedies // To preserve the body: but song is better than anything // That comes to us from overseas or is consumed in our courts [...].

Although except for the latter two books (*Den berch der gheestelicker vreughden* and *Den hemelschen handel der devote zielen*) all were published before Makeblijde's residence in Delft, yet there is no reason to believe that these publications (with their indebtedness to the Ignatian school of imaginative spiritual meditation) would have been unknown to his flock of faithful in the city's Jesuit station.

Makeblijde's work as a catechist, writer of a contemporary Jesuit hagiography and author of religious hymns can be contrasted with that of Stalpart van der Wiele who had set his sights as a writer primarily on evangelization, catechesis, and apologetics. Dutch Catholics recognized that Stalpart van der Wiele had embarked on a program of consistently increasing religious awareness in the Church:

Pastoor zijnde heeft hij [=Stalpart] waarlijk op zijn Apostels geleeft; en heeft zich zelve geheel en al / en al wat hy had / besteedt om het Katholijk geloof te verweeren / op te helderen / en uyt te breiden. Hier toe dienden zoo veele boekjes / en daar onder veele op rijm / die hy ter verdedinge van onzen Godsdienst / doch zonder naam / in 't licht gegeven heeft [...] ⁶¹

As a pastor he [=Stalpart] truly lived the life of an apostle, and he dedicated himself, as well as all that he possessed, to defending, elucidating, and spreading the Catholic faith. This was the purpose of so many books, including a great number of rhymed ones, which he published, albeit anonymously, with the aim of defending our religion [...].

As soon as Stalpart van der Wiele's two early works *Hemelryck* ('The kingdom of heaven') and *Evangelische schat* were published (both in the same year – 1621), it must have been evident that their author was seeking to re-establish in the minds of the readers a sense of the continuity of the history of the Church.⁶² At the same time, Stalpart van der Wiele's *oeuvre* continued the main traditions of Catholic writing in Delft, es-

⁶¹ Van Heussen, *Oudheden en gestichten van Delft*, p. 132.

⁶² For the themes of Stalpart van der Wiele's *Hemelryck* and *Evangelische schat* see Mensink, *Jan Baptist Stalpart van der Wiele*, p. 159 and p. 164; Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 17.

pecially in the area of hagiography, but also, as we will argue below, in other aspects of Catholic catechetical and devotional literature.

Hemelryck was a series of narrative poems in alexandrines illustrating twenty-six different Biblical *topoi* on the subject of heaven. As the text on the title leaf proclaimed, it was 'a hymn in praise of the kingdom of heaven which once inspired Adrian, a judge from Nicomedia, to the faith and to martyrdom for our Lord, Jesus Christ' ('Lof-sangh van 't Rijke der Hemelen 't welck eertijds beweeght heeft Adrianum Rechter van Nicomedien tot het Gheloof ende Martyrie ons' Heeren Jesu Christi').⁶³ The narrative linking all these poems was the life of St. Adrian, which treated of conversion and martyrdom. The spiritual guides leading St. Adrian towards a religious life were twenty-three Catholic martyrs, whose example the saint later followed by laying down his own life for the faith. But *Hemelryck* was not only a historical narrative; primarily it was intended as an *exemplum* for contemporary Catholics, and its relevance lay in the ability to 'inspire every God-fearing person to lead a pious life' ('nu yder Godvreesend Mensch behoort te beweghen tot een Godsaligh leven').⁶⁴ The work attested to Stalpart van der Wiele's deep interest in saints (and especially martyrs) as models and witnesses of faith. This was a spiritual affinity which would grow more pronounced with every year. It was possibly not without significance too, that St. Adrian was a patron saint of lawyers, the profession to which the book's author once belonged.

Another early religious tract by Stalpart van der Wiele was *Evangelische schat* ('Evangelical treasure').⁶⁵ Similarly as in *Hemelryck*, Stalpart followed in *Evangelische schat* a two-step procedure of first contrasting heavenly treasures (i.e. salvation) with deceptive earthly riches ('bedriegelicke Riickdommen Mammonis'), and then transitioning to the level of hagiography to illustrate on specific *exempla* the proper method of how Christians could attain the former. In this case these *exempla* were provided by two saints from the early ages of the Church, Hippolyte and Lawrence, a jailor and a prisoner who both died a martyr's death for their Christian faith. These saints were, as the title proclaimed, the

⁶³ [Stalpart van der Wiele], *Hemelryck*. Delft: Jan Pietersz Waelpot for Adriaen Claesz Vrijenbergh, 1621 [title page].

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ [Stalpart van der Wiele] *Evangelische schat van Christus Jezus ontdeckt, van Laurentius gepredickt, van Hippolytus verkregen, ende nu van nieuw ieder Christen menschen toone gestelt: omme van de bedriegelicke Riickdommen Mammonis te onderscheiden; ende als wezende 't hoogste Goed, met kosten van alle Geschapen Dingen te betrachten*. 's-Hertogenbosch: Jan Jansz Scheffer, 1621.

perfect examples to be followed by ‘every Christian individual’ (‘ieder Christen mensch’).⁶⁶ Again, Stalpart van der Wiele chose his protagonists for a reason: Hippolyte was one of the patron saints of Delft and Lawrence of Rotterdam; this made them attractive models for readers in his extensive parish. In terms of the continuity of Catholic religious literature, *Hemelryck*, *Evangelische schat*, and Stalpart van der Wiele’s later works on hagiography revived the tradition of later-medieval texts (esp. the *Passionael* which had numerous editions in Delft) and aligned themselves with the work of Sasbout Vosmeer, who had contemplated producing a collection of vernacular saints’ lives (for these texts and their related literary networks – see above, **Chapter 6.1**).

Hemelryck was the only book by Stalpart which is known to have been published in Delft (the printing was done by Jan Pieter Waelpots for Adryaen Claesz Vrijenbergh). Stalpart’s later books were published in ‘s-Hertogenbosch, Louvain and Antwerp, cities that were under Spanish jurisdiction.⁶⁷ Stalpart van der Wiele’s next book, *Vrouwelijck Cieraet van Sint’ Agnes Versmaedt* (‘Feminine adornment rejected by St. Agnes’) was published in ‘s-Hertogenbosch by Anthoni Scheffer (1622). The name of the Scheffer family of printers and publishers will appear subsequently on more works by Stalpart. *Vrouwelijck Cieraet* was a prose tract on proper costume for women (‘Kleed-Bericht’) followed by a series of eighteen poems dealing with various episodes from the life of St. Agnes, and ending with the veneration of her relics in Rome and the transfer of these relics to Utrecht.⁶⁸ Among the poetry found in this volume is an introductory verse (*drempeldicht*) signed ‘I.V.V.’, which has been inconclusively attributed to Joost van den Vondel.⁶⁹

Stalpart van der Wiele’s next work was the polemical tract *Roomsche reijs, t’zamenspraeks-gewijs tusschen Pieter de Reijser ende Abacuk Fijnen Broeder*. This book, published by Jan Scheffer (III) in ‘s-Hertogenbosch (1624), can be situated in a rich tradition of literature from Delft concerning spiritual pilgrimages. Here, Stalpart van der Wiele mixed prose and poetry to narrate a dispute between Pieter, a Catholic, and Habba-

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* [title leaf].

⁶⁷ The scholar J.J.A. Lucas claimed that some of Stalpart van der Wiele’s works were published in Delft under the names of really-existing printers in those towns in order to mislead the local authorities, see Lucas, ‘De drukkersadressen op enkele werken van Johan Stalpart van der Wiele’, pp. 205-212. Lucas’s theory was contested by Mensink, ‘Inleiding’ in: Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, pp. 17-18 but recently accepted by Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 19.

⁶⁸ Van Leeuwen, *ibid.*

⁶⁹ Mensink, *Jan Baptist Stalpart van der Wiele*, pp. 176-177.

kuk, a 'precise' Calvinist (*fijnen broeder*) about undertaking a journey to Rome for the celebrations of the jubilee year of 1625. At the same time, Stalpart van der Wiele dedicated this book to a range of topics that were at the center of Catholic-Protestant controversies. The *Roomsche reijs* provides ample evidence that Stalpart van der Wiele took the function of his text as an apologetic manual very seriously. To justify the apostolic succession, or to explain the theological reasoning behind the practice of pilgrimages, dispensations and the veneration of holy relics, Stalpart van der Wiele did careful research in the standard scholarly and polemical writings of the Catholic Counter-Reformation, especially by St. Roberto Bellarmino and two Flemish Jesuits: Martinus Becanus (Verbeeck; 1563-1624) and Leonardus Lessius (Leys, 1554-1623).⁷⁰ This suggests, interestingly, that ongoing arguments with Jesuits regarding the areas that lay within the competence of the Holland mission did not prevent Stalpart van der Wiele from obtaining inspiration for his book in works by that order's most celebrated controversialist authors.⁷¹

Yet despite this aura of learning the *Roomsche reijs* was eminently practical, as the book was ostensibly marketed as a polemical handbook for Dutch Catholics who interacted frequently with persons of a different religious background. An introductory poem (*drempeldicht*) by the further unidentified 'G. Balemus' humorously invited readers of all religions to purchase the *Roomsche reijs*. Speaking in the literary voice of an itinerant song-vendor (*liedjesventer*), Balemus offered a vigorous image of the reception of chapbooks and popular literature in the Dutch Republic:

Komt te marckt! En koopt dit Bouckje,
Om te lesen in een houkje
Wel geseten, wel bedacht,
Al die na de waerheid tracht.
Komt te marckt! ghy Catholiken,
Die Calvijn wilt deur sien strijcken,
Die een korte claere proof
Leren wilt van uw' geloof.
Komt te marckt! Ghy fijne Luyden.
Hoorde u hier den Text beduyden;

⁷⁰ Polman, *Stalpart en zijn 'Roomsche Reijs'* is a comprehensive and still highly relevant study of the sources that Stalpart van der Wiele assimilated into his treatise. See also Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 19.

⁷¹ This fruitful co-operation with Jesuits went back to the 1590s-1600, the period when the diocesan clergy, including Sasbout Vosmeer, appealed via the papacy to the order for help in the northern Netherlands, see e.g. Parker, *Faith on the Margins*, p. 83.

Ziet hier claerder als den dag,
 Hoemen te geloven plag.
 Komt all t'saem die u geneeren,
 Die van dag te dag verkeren
 Mette hooge Sprekers moet
 Van het *Puritains* gebroedt...⁷²

Come to the market-place! And buy this booklet // To read while sitting in the corner, // Comfortably and sunk in thought, // All who wish to find the truth. // Come to the market-place! All you Catholics, // Who want to give Calvin a good thrashing, // Who want to learn the clear concise proof // Of their faith. // Come to the market-place! All you precisians, // Hear how the Scripture is explained; // Now you'll see as clear as daylight // How people once used to believe. // Come here all you who are afraid, // Who interact every day // With the high pride of the preachers // Of the Puritan persuasion...

Further into this *drempeldicht* Balemius not only parodied a stream of anti-Catholic invective delivered from the pulpits of Calvinist churches, but also suggestively described the pervasiveness of this kind of language in everyday discourse:

Aldus preecktmen in uw' Kercken;
 Om de Kettery te stercken;
 Aldus schrijf[t]men: Pen en Bouk
 Sijn vervult met deze vlouk.
 Hier mee spelen de Scholieren,
 Hier mee scheren de Barbieren,
 Hier mee weeftmen, hier mee schier
 Drincktmen al 't gesmuickte Bier.
 Aldus hoortmen oock de Luyden,
 Onder-weegh de Text beduyden,
 Aende Taeffel, op de Banck.
 Dit's de Kouckouck eene sanck.
 Dorpen, Steden, Binnen, Buyten,
 Marckten, Beursen, Wagens, Schuyten,
 Zingen all' op deze maet,
 Praeten niet dan deze praet.⁷³

So they preach in all your churches // To make heresy grow stronger; // So they write: all pens and books // Are filled with this curse. // This is how schoolchildren play // This is how the barbers shave // This is how they weave, and even // How they drink their foamy beer. // This is how the travelling folk

⁷² [Stalpart van der Wiele], *Roomsche reijs*, fol. [* * * 4 r] – [* * * 5 v].

⁷³ [Stalpart van der Wiele], *op. cit.*, fol. [* * * 5 r] – [* * * 6 v].

// Interpret the Scripture // At a table, on the bench. // It's merely the cuckoo's song. // Towns and villages; inside, outside, // Markets, bourses, wagons, barges; // They all sing this melody, // They all talk this kind of talk.

In this kind of environment, where ever-present Protestant argumentation subjected Roman Catholics and their faith to relentless critique, the latter were sorely in need of arguments of their own to justify their faith. To Balemus the Catholic counter-arguments of Stalpart van der Wiele contained a powerful 'antidote' to the 'hemlock of Noyon' ('Noyons circuit'). According to the classical maxim of *utile dulci* the bitter taste of this apologetic 'medicine' was rendered more palatable by the 'honey of Parnassus'.⁷⁴

In this context of apologetic literature we can also place Stalpart van der Wiele's posthumously-published edition of religious-polemical songs, *Extractum catholicum, tegen alle gebreken van verwarde harsenen* ('A Catholic extract, against all the mistakes of confused minds' (Louvain: Bernardus Masius, 1631)).⁷⁵ The function of this spiritual medicine was explained in a *drempeldicht* by I. Cassianus entitled 'Operacy van't Extractum Catholicum', which in its form, tone, and even in its choice of words echoed Balemus' introduction to *Roomsche reijs*:⁷⁶

Dat nu alle zieke menschen
Vry nae haer gezondheid wenschen,
 Ziende hier d'oprechte Gom
 Van 't *Extract Catholikom*.
Schort het buiten, schort het binnen,
Schort het aan ontstelde zinnen,
 Schort het aen verstramde le'en;
 Dit extract is Algemeen.
Quellen u de taye fluimen;
Deze compost doetze ruymen,
 Steeckt u het ontsteke bloed;
 Hier is dat het koelen doet.
Is het *Bilis, flaef, oft' ater*;

⁷⁴ [Stalpart van der Wiele], *op. cit.*, fol. [* * * 6 v]. Hemlock (*cicuta*) was the poison administered to Socrates; Noyon in France was the birthplace of John Calvin.

⁷⁵ [Stalpart van der Wiele], *Extractum catholicum, tegen alle Gebreken van Verwarde Harsenen*. Louvain: Bernardus Masius, 1631.

⁷⁶ These similarities suggested to some scholars that Stalpart wrote these and other dedicatory poems himself, signing them with invented surnames (heteronyms), see e.g. Mensink, 'Inleiding' in: Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, pp. 26-27.

Is het 't groen of 't zwarte Water,
 Is het d'een of d'ander gal,
 Dit *Extract* geneest het al.⁷⁷

All patients suffering sickness // And in search of health // Can find here the true ingredients // Of the Catholic Extract. // Is the illness internal or external, // Are the senses afflicted, // Or are the limbs powerless // This extract is of service to one and all. // Are you afflicted by a severe phlegm? // This concoction will remove it. // Are you suffering from a blood infection? // Here's something that will soothe it. // Is the disease caused by bile or morbid matter, // Is it green or black urine // Is it this or the other gall? // This extract will cure them all.

Stalpart van der Wiele's songbook can be placed in a tradition of Netherlandish religious literature dating from the later Middle Ages, where, in conjunction with frequent references to healing in the Gospels,⁷⁸ Christ was sometimes presented as a physician of the body and soul.⁷⁹ After the Reformation the confessor was frequently presented as a physician in literature from Jesuit circles, dispensing 'spiritual medicine for the conscience'.⁸⁰ This particular songbook was conceived by Stalpart van der Wiele as an apothecary's storehouse of remedies to heal the hearts and minds afflicted by the current Protestant critique of Catholic faith. Healing properties were attributed to unadulterated knowledge of the teaching of the Church. Of prime importance was argumentation based on Scriptural scholarship in the light of the early Fathers of the Church, or as another introductory poem put it, 'the Old and New Testament explained after the old understanding of the Greeks and Romans' ('t Sijn bey de Testamenten: // Uytgeleyt nae 't Oud verstand // Der Grieken / en Latinen').⁸¹ This information, the medicine itself, was mainly dispensed in the Catechism format of easy-to-understand questions and answers (for example, 'Why do you make the sign of the

⁷⁷ [Stalpart van der Wiele], *Extractum catholicum*, fol. [A 7 r].

⁷⁸ See e.g. Mk 2: 17 'They that are well have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. For I came not to call the just, but sinners'.

⁷⁹ The library of the Convent of St. Barbara at Delft contained a book entitled 'Jhesus die doctoer' [87]. Moll, *De boekerij van het St. Barbara-Klooster te Delft*, p. 59.

⁸⁰ Parker, *Faith on the margins*, p. 126. A model for Stalpart's *Extractum* can be found in the French Jesuit Etienne Binet's *Consolation et résioissance pour les malades*, translated into the Dutch as *Apotheke der geestelijker medicijnen* (Antwerp: Jan Cnobbaert, 1621). See Rogier, *Geschiedenis van het katholicisme*, vol. ii, p. 779.

⁸¹ [Stalpart van der Wiele], *Extractum catholicum*, fol. [B 2 r].

cross?'),⁸² but also through satire, as in the humorous song about the antics of a Calvinist preacher, *Vader Koen*.⁸³

In a climate that produced a rebirth of Catholic song culture Stalpart van der Wiele published two large volumes of songs. *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi* ('The golden year of our Lord Jesus Christ', 1628),⁸⁴ contained around one hundred devotional songs treating of scriptural themes based on the readings for each Sunday and movable religious holiday of the liturgical year together with accompanying prayers.⁸⁵ By then he was ready with a second volume that would have appeared soon afterwards. However, his illness and death two years later cut short the anticipated publication of that songbook. The remainder of the religious songs that Stalpart van der Wiele wrote during his lifetime for the choir at the Bagijnhof, were collected and posthumously published as *Den Schat der Geestelijcke lofsangen* ('The treasury of spiritual hymns', 1634).⁸⁶ This songbook was soon reissued under an altered title which more closely reflected Stalpart's original concept of a Golden Year or Age of Christianity: *Gulde-Iaers Feest-Dagen* ('Feast-days of the golden year', 1635).⁸⁷ It contained more than five hundred songs about Catholic saints as well as songs intended for the immovable holidays of the liturgical calendar such as Christmas (for this songbook and for Stalpart's program of reviving Catholic identity in the Netherlands, see below, **Chapter 8.5**).⁸⁸

Stalpart van der Wiele's songs were not republished during his lifetime or after his death under his name (with the sole exception of the two aforementioned versions of *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*). This fact led some scholars in the past to question the impact of the Delft priest-poet on the Catholic literature of his day. A recurrent image, evoked since the 19th century, was that of Stalpart van der Wiele as a consummate

⁸² [Stalpart van der Wiele], *op. cit.*, pp. 4-7.

⁸³ [Stalpart van der Wiele], *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

⁸⁴ [Stalpart van der Wiele], *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi, Eerste [sic] Deel: Op alle de Zonnen-Dagen des Jaers*. 's-Hertogenbosch, J. Scheffer, 1628. A modern edition is available: Stalpart van der Wiele (ed. Mensink), *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*.

⁸⁵ Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 39.

⁸⁶ [Stalpart van der Wiele], *Der Schat der Geestelijcke lofsangen. Gemaect opde feestdagen van t' geheele Jaer. Gedicht door den Eerwaerdigen heer J.S.V.W.* Antwerp: Johannes Cnobbaert, 1634.

⁸⁷ [Stalpart van der Wiele], *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen of Den Schat der Geestelycke Lof-Sangen, Gemaect op Elcken Feestdag van t'geheele Jaer*. Antwerp: Johannes Cnobbaert, 1635.

⁸⁸ Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 39.

wordsmith ensconced in hermit-like isolation at the Bagijnhof in Delft.⁸⁹ Only recently, however, it has been discovered that Stalpart's songs were re-published by the authors of other Catholic songbooks. Newer research by C. van Leeuwen has pointed to Stalpart van der Wiele's involvement in an already vibrant Catholic song culture in Netherlands (both north and south), and in a wider sense, in the intellectual culture of the Catholic Counter-Reformation in the southern Netherlands and Italy. There is much evidence showing the uninterrupted circulation of Stalpart's songs, often in modified form, among Dutch Catholics. Songs originally composed by Stalpart were sung by Catholic congregations in the Netherlands throughout the next century, and even up to the 1800s. This song culture was still very much alive when in the mid-19th century Alberdingk Thijm, one of the leaders of the Catholic revival in the Netherlands, generated a new interest in Stalpart van der Wiele's work as an important monument of seventeenth-century Dutch religious poetry.⁹⁰

8.5. CONCLUSIONS: 'A GOLDEN AGE AND A GOLDEN PEOPLE'.
 THE CHRISTIAN GOLDEN AGE
 IN STALPART VAN DER WIELE'S PROLOGUE
 TO *GULDE-JAER ONS HEEREN IESU CHRISTI*
 AS A MODEL FOR REBUILDING CATHOLIC IDENTITY

Johannes Stalpart van der Wiele perceived Roman Catholic religious identity as a constantly unfolding project of profound significance to Christians and non-Christians alike. Nowhere in his writing did this conviction speak stronger than in his prologue to *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu-Christi* (1628), the 'Op-schrift des boecks'. A *tour-de-force* of Catholic apologetics, this introduction presents a bold vision of the involvement of Christians in the history of mankind. It is a text which deserves to be read anew, not only because it has come within the purview of only relatively few scholars studying the Catholic literature of the early-

⁸⁹ Such an image of Stalpart van der Wiele, derived from the Romantic tradition of inspired poetic solitude, was launched by J.A. Alberdingk Thijm, one of the leaders of the 19th century Dutch Catholic revival. Alberdingk Thijm stimulated an early revival of interest in Stalpart van der Wiele's poetry. For a detailed bibliography of the 19th century reception of Stalpart van der Wiele in the Netherlands, see Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, pp. 23-28.

⁹⁰ Van Leeuwen, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-35.

modern Low Countries, but most especially because it offers a unique insight into Stalpart van der Wiele's project for rebuilding the Catholic identity of the Dutch in harmony with the history and tradition of the Church during a period of crisis, change and disruption.⁹¹

To complete his project Stalpart van der Wiele resorted to Christian interpretations of the motif of the Golden Age (*aurea aetas*). The Golden Age, as described by Hesiod and Ovid, was the first mythical period of human civilization, a state of paradisiacal existence for all of mankind. All subsequent ages were less favorable than the preceding one, ending with the last 'Iron Age', where human life was reduced to a brutal struggle for survival. Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, where a prophecy of the Sybil of Cumae heralded the return of that first harmonious and peaceful state, foretold, as it were, a rebirth of humanity in its original unspoiled condition.⁹²

Whereas Virgil used the oracle to eulogize the birth of the son of a Roman official, Gaius Asinius Pollio, this interpretation was contested, and the prophecy itself raised to an entirely new moral and spiritual level by early Christians who found that it described, through analogies derived from classical mythology, the birth of Christ and the future history of the Church. The Christian exegesis of Virgil's Fourth Eclogue (to which Stalpart van der Wiele referred at length in the prologue of *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*)⁹³ was given its greatest impetus by emperor Constantine the Great. Large passages of the poem were cited by him and interpreted as pertaining to the birth of Christ during an official address made shortly before the formal recognition of Christianity

⁹¹ Stalpart van der Wiele's authorship of the *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, published anonymously, was convincingly argued by B.A. Mensink and verified by C. van Leeuwen. the present research follows the conclusions of both these authors in assuming Stalpart to have been the author of the book as well as of the introduction ('Op-schrift'). The 'Op-Schrift' found a brief scholarly analysis in works by Mensink, 'Inleiding' in: Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, pp. 19-25, and Van Leeuwen (*Hemelse voorbeelden*, pp. 41-44). B.A. Mensink tracked down the textual sources of Stalpart's argumentation comparing the cited passages against the 16th and 17th century editions that the Delft priest might have used. C. van Leeuwen placed the 'Opschrift' in the context of efforts to deepen the spiritual rebirth offered by jubilee celebrations ('Van Jubeljaar tot Gulden Jaar: Rome-reizen en geestelijke bedevaarten in het begin van de zeventiende eeuw' – unpublished). According to Van Leeuwen, Stalpart's concept of a 'golden year' characterized the volume as a *proprium sanctorum* and emphasized the significance of Catholic participation in the liturgical year (*Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 43).

⁹² Vergilius Maro, *Virgil's Eclogues* (ed. G. Davis), pp. 31-36.

⁹³ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, pp. 60-61.

as the religion of the Roman Empire (c. 313 A.D.). Constantine perceived Virgil's Fourth Eclogue as an important argument speaking of the universal truth of Christianity. The non-Christian world could not remain indifferent to the message of Christ's coming for even its greatest literary voice lent its authority to the narrative of Christian eschatology.⁹⁴

The key concept that Stalpart injected into the mentality of Dutch Catholics was the idea that a human civilization could be reborn in a new Golden Age through the grace of Christ,

[...] dat Christus Iesus, die ons eyghentlyck van den hooghen Hemel ghesonden, uyt eene Maget gheboren, den wel-beminden soone Godts, het Evenbeeldt, Glorie ende Wasdom is des Alderhooghestens; ende voorts alle de andere eer-namen van Sybilla, meer als t'over is verdiendende; oock alleen is de ghene die de wereltdt, achtervolghens hare prophecye, soude vercierien met eene gouden eeuwte, ende een verguldt volck.⁹⁵

[...] *that Jesus Christ, who was sent to us from the highest heavens, born of a Virgin, the dearly beloved Son of God, the Image, Glory and Increase of the Highest, and more than deserved all the honorable names bestowed on him by the Sibyl, is also the one who was to adorn the world, according to her prophecy, with a golden age and a golden people* [emphasis mine – M.P.].

To Stalpart van der Wiele the Christian Golden Age was an eschatological concept that transcended the well-known Holy Year of Jubilee known from the Old Testament Book of Leviticus (25: 1-17).⁹⁶ Nor was

⁹⁴ At around the same time as Constantine, the Christian scholar Lactantius also interpreted the Fourth Eclogue as referring to Christ. With Lactantius, however, the focus lay on the Second Coming, which he expected to take place at the millennium (*Divinae institutiones* VII, 24). Another early Christian scholar who acknowledged the prophetic character of the Fourth Eclogue was St. Augustine who in *De civitate Dei* (X, 27) recognized the Eclogue as an allegory, but one that was obscure and difficult to understand because Virgil did not fully comprehend its meaning. In *Epistolae ad Romanos inchoata expositio* (I, 3) St. Augustine acknowledged the possibility that the pagan prophets might have intuitively sensed the coming of Christ prior to His birth. For St. Augustine the authenticity of the Sibylline prophecy rested on the fact that it had come from Virgil, an authoritative source of knowledge. See e.g. Bourne, 'The Messianic prophecy in Vergil's Fourth Eclogue', pp. 390-400; Smiley, 'Vergil – His Philosophic Background and his Relation to Christianity', pp. 660-675.

⁹⁵ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, p. 61.

⁹⁶ The special time cycles of the Jewish religious calendar comprised a primary cycle lasting seven years, the last year of which was celebrated as a Sabbatical year during which fields were not to be ploughed and vineyards were to be left untended. In that year the ground of the Israelites was laid to rest as a reminder of the Sabbath, the seventh day on which God rested after the creation of the world. Seven such cycles, each numbering seven years, were followed by a fiftieth year which was generally regarded as

the meaning of 'Golden year' (*Gulde-Jaer*) in the title of *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi* intended to bring to mind the familiar Catholic jubilee years during which special indulgences could be obtained.⁹⁷ All these celebrations, notwithstanding their significance, were embedded (for Christians) in a more profound spiritual order. For Stalpart van der Wiele, the Golden Year was different from any of these finite periods of time; it was an unending Christian Age of humanity immersed in the glory of the eternal presence of Jesus Christ. The Golden Year was therefore named after:

[...] het Koninghlijcke goudt, daer den Koningh der Glorien Christus Iesus ghebenedijdt, door middel van sijne menschwordingh, leeringh, leven, lijden, doodt, verrijsenisse, ende alle 't ghene daer aenklevende is, de wereld mede verguldt, ende sijne Kercke gherijckt heeft.⁹⁸

[...] the gold of royalty by which the blessed King of Glory, Jesus Christ, through his Incarnation, teaching, life, Passion, Death, Resurrection, and all that goes with it, has rendered the world golden and enriched his Church.

The reference to gold, an attribute of royalty, indicated Christ's kingship among His faithful on earth. The meaning of Stalpart's *Gulde-Jaer* rested, therefore, on the central Christian concept of Christ as King. Underlying the theology of Christ's kingship, in Scriptural terms, was the Old Testament tradition which concerned the coming of a powerful monarch, the Messiah. Of the various Biblical prophecies interpreted by

a holy or jubilee year of celebration and remission of debts. Cf. Thurston, 'Jubilee, Holy Year of' in: *TCE*, vol. viii, pp. 531-534 and Oussani, 'Jubilee, Hebrew Year of', *ibid.*, pp. 534-535.

⁹⁷ The term 'golden year' is in fact traditionally used to refer to the meaning of the Christian year of jubilee. Cf. Thurston, 'Jubilee, Holy Year of' in: *TCE*, vol. viii, p. 532. The question of what Stalpart meant by 'Gulde Jaer' has implications for the translation of the titles of his songbooks. *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen* has been translated into English by T. Hermans as 'Jubilee year Saint's Days', whereas *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi* was rendered as 'Jubilee Year of Our Lord Jesus Christ', (Hermans, *A Literary History of the Low Countries*, p. 248). Stalpart van der Wiele, however, made it amply clear at this point in the preface to *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi* that his 'Gulde Jaer' referred neither to the Old Testament year of jubilee nor to the papal jubilee years, but to the age of Christianity as an infinite, continuing period of time reaching out into the future. This 'Golden Year' would start with the coming of the Messiah prophesied by the prophets of the Old Testament and correspond to the new Golden Age foretold by the Sibylline oracle of Cumae. The English translation as 'Golden Year' used in the present study therefore reflects more closely the meaning of the title given by Stalpart van der Wiele (*Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, p. 49). Stalpart's 'Gulde-Jaer' is also translated as 'Golden Year' by Veldhorst, 'Pharmacy for the body and soul', pp. 217-285.

⁹⁸ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, p. 49.

Christians as heralding the birth of the Messiah and announcing the arrival of His kingdom, Stalpart mentioned three. These were addressed to 'those who believe [in the One God], that is to say, the Jews' ('voor den gheloovighen, dat is, den Ioden').⁹⁹ The main source was the prophecy of Isaiah (61:1) regarding the coming of a Messiah who will proclaim good news to the poor, console the brokenhearted and announce a year of reconciliation. That year, Stalpart added, would be 'a year of remission, of indulgence, a golden year, a veritable year of jubilee' ('een jaer van quijtschelding, van Aflaet, een Gulde jaer, een waerachtigh jaer van Iubilee'). Stalpart van der Wiele's argument was that the theme of a jubilee or golden year was indeed not to be regarded restrictively, but rather that it was to refer to a limitless period of time during which the things described in the prophecy (Isaiah 61:1) will come to pass among those who accepted Christ as the Messiah.

According to this Christian interpretation, 'the Prophets compared the gifts and grace, which Christ bestowed upon and with which he adorned the ecclesiastic ranks of His new Covenant [i.e. the Church], to well-purified, brightly-shining gold' ('Nademael dan de Propheten de gaven, ghenaden ende gratien, daer Christus den Kerckelijcken stand sijns nieuwe Testaments mede beschenken ende vercierren soude, vergeleken hebben by een schoon gesuyvert, klaer-blinckendt ende wel-geloutert goudt').¹⁰⁰ The spiritual significance of these prophecies was the point of departure of the project set out in *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi* of outlining a vibrant new identity for Christians.

[...] soo en is niet te verwonderen dat wy dese onse Lof-sanghen, als inehoudende de bysonderste mysterien van de leeringhe, ende het leven ons Heeren Iesu Christi, ende sijner liever vrienden, sulcks de selve van oudts by de voorsienighe dispensatie der heyligher Kercke, door alle de behoorlijcke dagen des jaers zijn verdeylt, toe-geschreven hebben den tijtel van't *Gulde Jaer*.¹⁰¹

[...] seeing this, it should not surprise anyone that we [=Stalpart van der Wiele] have given our hymns the title of the 'Golden Year', since they contain the innermost mysteries of the teaching [of the Church] and [reflect upon] the life of our Lord Jesus Christ and of his dear friends [=the saints] distributed by the well-providing dispensation of the holy Church throughout the entire year.

⁹⁹ Stalpart van der Wiele, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁰ Stalpart van der Wiele, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

In the light of this passage, Stalpart van der Wiele made a logical transition from the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament to the Christian understanding of the enduring 'gold' of grace which Christ had imparted to His followers. The 'gold' of Christ's spiritual gifts was present in the hymns that he had written for each day of the liturgical year. This 'gold' was multiplied in the celebrations of the yearly liturgical cycle, whereby each year of the Church became, as it were, a veritable jubilee in its own right. The spiritual wealth that Christ offered to His followers was most evident in His life, i.e. the events of the Gospels which made up the theme of the songs from the *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Jesu Christi*. The 'gold' of God's grace manifested itself also in the lives of Christ's 'friends' – the Apostles, martyrs and saints, present in the liturgical calendar. A companion to these feast-days was Stalpart van der Wiele's other large songbook, *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*, where every day was dedicated to telling the life-story of one or several saints.

The promise of the Christian 'golden year' was addressed not only to those with whom the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament resonated in a special way, but to all of mankind. The aim of prophecies foretelling the coming of the Messiah had been 'to reassure not only those who believe [in the One God, i.e. the Jews], but also [to convince] those who do not believe [non-Jews, i.e. the Gentiles]' ('dat tot versekeringh, niet alleen van de Gheloovighen, maer oock van de ongheloovighen').¹⁰² This reassurance Stalpart van der Wiele now wished to extend to his contemporary 'Gentiles' in the Netherlands. With this in mind, in the prologue to *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen* Stalpart van der Wiele reconstructed the Catholic exegesis of the Sibylline prophecy concerning the return of the Golden Age conveyed in the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil, where (as Christian exegetes believed), the pagan world of classical antiquity obtained its first intimation of the coming of Christianity.

No other preface to a Catholic songbook in the seventeenth-century Netherlands was quite like the prologue to *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*.¹⁰³ What Stalpart van der Wiele undertook to do was certainly a most unconventional strategy. What might have been the cultural impact of Stalpart's vision of a Christian Golden Age on his Dutch readers? What was its effect on stimulating their Catholic identity? The somewhat pessimis-

¹⁰² Stalpart van der Wiele, *op. cit.*, pp. 49-50.

¹⁰³ The rather straightforward introductions to Gillis Haefacker's *Het Paradys der Gheestelycke en Kerckelycke Lof-sangen* by (published under the pseudonym 'Salomon Theodotus', 3rd ed., 1638) or Cornelis Vermeulen's *'t Ronde Jaer* (1644) and others prove that such texts were adapted to the level of a general church-going audience.

tic (or, as others might say, realistic) conviction expressed by Stalpart van der Wiele in the last lines of the prologue to *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi* was that most people using the songbook were more likely to become better Christians by singing the songs than by reading the abstruse reasoning in the prologue! ('Ende of ghy schoon dit noch niet vatten en kondt door myn segghen, soo sult ghy het by avonturen vroed werden door u singhen').¹⁰⁴ This passage suggests that Stalpart was aware of the difficult reception that the prologue would encounter when he decided to write about the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil and its Sibylline prophecy of the Golden Age, and yet he settled on these learned themes as his subject-matter instead of on some topic that might have been more readily accessible to his readers.

The question that one can ask is, then, why did Stalpart van der Wiele go to all this trouble? The themes of the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil undoubtedly appealed to the Roman Catholic humanist-trained elites who were naturally receptive to subject-matter concerning the truth of Christianity and the historical continuity of the Church. The prologue bolstered Catholic identity by re-investing it with the meaning of an eschatological tradition; its argument was that the message of God was capable of transcending the barriers of time and culture, since the truth about the birth of Christ and His kingdom was even proclaimed by the pagan oracles:

Wat nu belanght de Prophecy voor den ongelooovighen, dat is, Romeynen, Griecten, ende andere Heydenen: die ons mede tot desen geen kleyne oorsaek en heeft ghegeven: is gheweest de voorsegginge van *Sibylla Cumana*. Midts-welcken soo weet, dat de goedertierenheydt Godts, om alle menschen te brenghen tot kennisse des waerheydts, ende tot het salighmakende geloof ons liefs Heeren Iesu Christi, ghelijcker wijs hy tot dien eynde den Ioden bereydt hadde door figuren ende Prophecijen: dat hy alsoo oock de Heydenen daer toe allenskens ghedisponeert heeft door middel van Teyckenken, Orakelen, ende eyghene Prophecijen...¹⁰⁵

Pertaining to the prophecy for the unbelievers, that is to say, the Romans, Greeks, and other heathen, which was not the least cause of [our writing] this [text], was the prophecy of the Sibyl of Cumae. Through it one becomes aware that it pleased the merciful God to bring all people the knowledge of the truth and of the saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; that as He prepared the Jews to this purpose by means of figures [=symbols] and prophecies, so likewise did He prepare the pagans for the same purpose by means of signs, oracles and their own prophecies...

¹⁰⁴ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, p. 62.

¹⁰⁵ Stalpart van der Wiele, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

It is through analogies such as these – anchored in the parallel motif of Biblical and pagan prophecies announcing the birth of Jesus – that Stalpart van der Wiele's prologue attested to an overwhelming desire to speak of the truthfulness and fundamental unity of Christianity in an unbroken continuity reaching until the present day and looking forward to the end of time.

Christian and classical themes can be found in abundance in the three dedicatory poems (*drempeldichten*) attached to the prologue to *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*. The first dedicatory text, signed rather cryptically by 'Your Honor's Other Self W.V.I.' ('V.E. Andere Ick. W.V.I.'), was partly a translation and partly a commentary to Virgil's Fourth Eclogue. B.A. Mensink suggested that its author was Stalpart van der Wiele himself.¹⁰⁶ Yet whatever the truth about the authorship of this poem might be, it conveys a wealth of information about the Christian humanist credentials of the literary network to which the concept of a Christian Golden Age was addressed.¹⁰⁷ In this literary circle, for instance, there was nothing amiss with starting a friendly poetic argument with Virgil:

Houdt Maro, Maro! houdt geleerdsten der Poëten!
 Waer heen draeght u de sucht? hoe gaet ghy soo vergeten
 Uws selfs, dat ghy 't Gedicht van een soo ouden maeghd
 Den rechten Heer beneemt, en aen een vreemde draeght.¹⁰⁸

Hold, Maro, Maro! Hold, o most learned of the poets! // Why does this foolishness lead you astray? Why are you not true // To your own nature, since you've taken the poem of such an old maiden // From its rightful Lord, and offered it to another?

Here, Virgil was reproached for making the 'mistake' of dedicating the Sibylline prophecy to the infant son of Gaius Asinius Pollio instead of the rightful addressee who was Jesus Christ. This situated the readers of Stalpart van der Wiele's prologue firmly within a learned milieu which

¹⁰⁶ Its author signed his name rather cryptically as 'V.E. Andere Ick. W.V.I.' ('Your Honor's Other Self W.V.I.'). This enigmatic attribution gave rise to the supposition that it was Stalpart van der Wiele who had written this text. Mensink, 'Inleiding' in: Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, pp. 26-27.

¹⁰⁷ Stalpart van der Wiele's circle of highly educated acquaintances included Neo-Latin poet Cornelius Plempius of Amsterdam, who collaborated with Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft on the Latin translations of the *Emblemata amatoria* (1611), and eventually published two epigrams about Stalpart van der Wiele in 1638 (Van Leeuwen, *Hemelse voorbeelden*, p. 23). Plempius' ties to the Catholic humanist circles of Delft can be seen in his Latin poetry dedicated to Cornelius Musius, *Musius, sive Rhythmi*, Amsterdam: Hans Walschaert, 1618.

¹⁰⁸ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, p. 67.

was capable of appreciating, and then reappraising, the canonical status of Virgil. The Roman poet's text was challenged not because it was artistically imperfect, but because he gave an erroneous meaning to the Sibyl's prophecy when he foolishly tried to gain the favors of the high and mighty:

Dan dit is d'oude straf van hen die om de hoven
Te vleyen, Godes eer wel dickwils dorven roven.
Den hemel is jalours, En straft vroeg of laet
Al die om 's werelds gunst, sijns Scheppers eer versmaedt.¹⁰⁹

This is the old punishment for those who flatter // The courts; doing so, they rob God of His glory. // The jealous heavens shall dispense punishment // To those who prefer the world's favors, disdaining the honor of its Maker.

The true honor was therefore due not so much to Virgil but to Stalpart van der Wiele, the author of *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*, for it was the latter who had rescued the Sibylline oracle out of the 'hands of the thief' ('uyt d'handen van den Rover'). This act of theft was perpetrated by Virgil when he gave the incorrect interpretation of the Sibyl's prophecy. Stalpart van der Wiele 'restored' it to its rightful 'owner' who was Jesus Christ, by reverting to the correct (i.e. Christian) meaning of the prophecy.¹¹⁰

The second dedicatory poem, 'Gesang op 't Gulde Jaer' ('Song of the Golden Year'), played out the Christian meaning of the Golden Year against the implications of the return of the reign of Saturn which had been foretold in the Fourth Eclogue ('redeunt Saturnia regna', *Ecl.* IV, 6). The topic was formulated in the following way:

Met een *Quaeritur* aen de Poëten: Waerom
Dat by hen-luyden het Gulde leven
Saturno werdt toe-geschreven, Die nochtans van zijn
Soon werde verjaecht, en selfs zijn kinderen plach te eten.¹¹¹

With a Quaeritur [=question] to the Poet: Why // Did the men [of antiquity] ascribe the Golden Age // To Saturn, who after all was banished // By his son, and who was in the habit of eating his own children.

How to reconcile the fact that some elements of pagan mythology could be aligned with Christian symbolism while others most obviously could not? The author, concealed behind the initials 'S.I.K.', did not answer

¹⁰⁹ Stalpart van der Wiele, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

¹¹⁰ Stalpart van der Wiele, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.

¹¹¹ Stalpart van der Wiele, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

this question directly. Instead he reviewed one by one the mythological commonplaces responsible for this discrepancy, and most especially the image of the child-devouring Saturn, finally deciding that:

Soo wil ick die gulde platen
Gaerne laten;
En Saturno schelden quijt.
Want voor-seker sulcke Eeuwen
Zijn voor Leeuwen
Een bequamen Gulden tijdt.

*So I'd like to leave behind // These plates of gold // And let Saturn have them.
// For surely such centuries // Are, for lions, // A better Golden Age [than for humans].*

The only true Golden Age that ever deserved this name was the age of Christianity, whose history is reflected in the songs of the liturgical year in *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Jesu Christi* and *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*:

Beter / en van dierder wesen
Als het dese /
Dunckt my d'eeuw te zijn voorwaer/
Die ons d'aldersoetste lieden
Hier aenbieden
Van dit lieve Gulde-Iaer.¹¹²

Better, and infinitely more dear // Than this [=the Age of Saturn] // Is indeed the age // Which gave us here // The sweetest songs // Of this precious Golden Year.

Stalpart's prologue as well as the dedicatory texts displayed a shared tendency to rationally debate the merits of Graeco-Roman culture in relation to the doctrines and ethical system of Christianity. It was basically an exercise in apologetics, in which the products of antiquity were assessed and found wanting. That verdict was never an absolute condemnation, however. The culture of antiquity was simply regarded as a stage of human civilization which had been surpassed with the coming of Christ, and yet that same culture had such high cultural status that information about it was retrieved time and time again. Moreover, as we have seen with regard to Stalpart's narrative about the Sibylline prophecies of Virgil, the rich culture of antiquity was highly respected for those things that were found to be consistent with Christianity.

¹¹² Stalpart van der Wiele, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

The last dedicatory poem, ‘De vergulde lier van ‘t Gulde Jaer, Vergeleken by de Grieksche lier Horatii’ (‘The golden lyre of the Golden Year compared to the Greek lyre of Horace’), was explicitly such an exercise in contrast and judgment. The author, signed as ‘Totus Tuus I.P.’, was tentatively identified by B.A. Mensink as Johan van Persijn, a Catholic gentleman of Wassenaar.¹¹³ Yet whoever the author was, he (or she) must have been a person of vast erudition and considerable poetic talent. The poem delivered a reaction to the poetic heritage of antiquity from a Christian perspective:

Die eerst de Grieksche Lier gebracht heeft binnen Romen,
 Heeft door de Grieksche Lier een grooten naem bekomen.
 Maer naem, die langer niet, oock na de volste maet
 By hem verhoopt, en duert dan tot dat d’aerde staet.
 Dit was zijn eenigh wit, en hier toe strecken al de
 Gedichten, daer hy oyt mee vroedde of mee malde.
 ’t Zy op *Maecenas* hof, ’t zy op d’onnutte schoot
 Van *Thaïs*. Ach! ’t Was scha, in een soo vuylen goot
 De cristallyne vocht van Castalis te gieten,
 Hoe sou d’onsaligh nu, tot troost van zijn verdrieten,
 Die t’samen met zijn lier aengroeyen sonder end,
 Wel wenschen, dat hy hier noyt lier en had gekent.
 Maer dit is nu met hem gelijck ’t sal moeten blijven.
 Want God wil dat de straf aen d’ondeugd sal beklijven.
 Veel beter was bedacht den meester van dit werck;
 Die zijn Vergulde Lier voor God en voor zijn Kerck
 Hier snaerd, op datse sou door honderden van sanghen,
 De Wereld na de Lier des Hemels doen verlanghen.
 Gelukkig Musicien! die niet dan met geneugd
 Kondt trecken van het quaed, en locken tot de deugd.
 DenHemel zy uw’ loon; terwijl ghy van de menschen,
 Door ’t heelen van uw naem geen loon en schijnt te wenschen,
 En geef’ u voor ’t geluyd van uw gespanne lier,
 De onverlepte krans van d’eeuwige Laurier.¹¹⁴

He who first brought the Greek lyre to Rome // Discovered that it increased the renown of his name // Yet it was merely a name that (even for all his hope) // Was not to last longer than the world would stand. // That was his sole aim – the sole aim of all the verse // That he ever composed, whether seriously or in jest, // Sometimes at Maecenas’ court, sometimes on the lap

¹¹³ Mensink, ‘Inleiding’ in: Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde Jaer Ons Heeren Jesu Christi*, p. 28.

¹¹⁴ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, p. 76-77.

// Of Thaïs. O, what a waste it was, into such // A dirty ditch to pour Castalia's streams; // How this unfortunate man, hoping to find solace // For the woes about which his lyre sang for evermore // Would have wished he'd never known its strings. // But now with him all this shall remain, // For God destined it so that punishment should follow upon vice. // A far better thought had the author of this work, // Who struck his Golden Lyre for God // And for his Church, so that by manifold songs // That Church would make the world wish for Heaven's Lyre. // O fortunate Musician! Whose pleasure was // To flee from evil and to encourage what is good. // Let Heaven be your prize (since from people // You desire no reward by selling your name), // And for the sound of your well-strung lyre // Receive, therefore, the un-withered wreath of eternal laurels.

The poem by 'Totus Tuus I.P.' alluded to Horace's Ode 'Ad Melpomenem' (*Carm.* III.30), where poetry was described as an enduring monument that will survive longer than any other work of man, and to Virgil's expectation that his poetry will rival that of Orpheus (*Ecl.* IV, 53-59). Horace's poetic discourse, however, was reformulated from a Christian point of view. The poet's name admittedly lived on, but his fame was forever tied up with rather sordid or meaningless events. Horace was called *onsalig*, which conveyed not only an emotional sense of unhappiness, but also the Christian meaning of unattained salvation. Horace's moral position was contrasted with Stalpart van der Wiele's 'golden lyre' of the *Gulde-Jaer* songbooks, which served an entirely different purpose. The eternal but earthly fame of Horace was nothing compared to everlasting life, the prize to which all Christians aspire, and which the 'musician' Stalpart van der Wiele attained in his songs.

Why was the classical tradition chosen as the platform from which to launch the Catholic theological narrative of the Golden Year (*Gulde-Jaer*)? We may now venture a conclusion by stating that what exercised the strongest intellectual attraction on the members of Stalpart's literary field was: (1) that the history of the Church could be viewed in continuity from the coming of Christ till the present day; (2) that the history of the Church found an indirect confirmation in some products of pagan antiquity (Virgil and the prophecies of the Sibyls); (3) that the cultural supremacy of paganism either faded or acquired a new meaning when it was measured by the moral standards of Christianity. All three points were probably an outlook that Stalpart van der Wiele shared with the authors of the dedicatory texts and with at least a significant segment of his readers.

All this having been said, even more reasons can be given why Stalpart van der Wiele chose to preface his songbook by such a demanding

narrative. Literary motifs stemming from the work of the classical poets Virgil and Horace were a shared idiom that would have been easily recognized by all educated Dutch readers of the 17th century regardless of their creed. The Golden Age was a theme of the *Heroides* of Helius Eobanus Hessus (1488-1540), a German humanist who declared sympathy for the Reformation. Similarly as the authors of the introductory poems in Stalpart van der Wiele's *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Jesu Christi*, Hessus too disqualified classical mythology as inferior to Christianity and moreover untrue in the first of his *Heroides*; in this Hessus followed a similar track as Erasmus in the *Ciceronianus*.¹¹⁵ Erasmus is, of course, another author whose treatment of the parallel motif of the *aurea aetas* must be mentioned here. Erasmus praised the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary in terms strongly reminiscent of the classical *aurea aetas* in his *Paeon divae Mariae, atque de incarnatione verbi*, an early ode that he written in a poetic competition with Aegidius Delfus (a theologian and humanist whose name is associated with Delft – see above, **Chapter 2.6**).¹¹⁶ In his ode Erasmus alluded to Virgil's authorship of the 'Messianic' Eclogue (vs. 69-76), proclaiming that the birth of Christ will bring about a new Golden Age (vs. 313-316).¹¹⁷

A clear line emerges, therefore, of literature whose origins are in some way related to Delft and whose contents betray an affinity with the parallel motif of the *aurea aetas*. From Erasmus and Delfus to Stalpart van der Wiele we find examples of this theme. This line branches out leading us into a vast area of 'Sibylline' literature whose origins or content can be situated in Delft. It is here that we find Nerdenus's *Dialogus*, followed by scattered references to this theme, very often tinged by a critique of Delft's Catholic pre-Reformation past, coming from the pen of Junius, Van Hout, Barlaeus and others, not to mention the many examples found in the pictorial arts (see above, **Chapter 3.1.-3.2**). All this suggests that by writing a Christian paraphrase of Virgil's Fourth Eclogue Stalpart van der Wiele resorted to a language of literary themes that was well-known to educated readers. Even though Stalpart van der Wiele did not refer to Delft in any way in his prologue, the discourse of motifs related to the Sibylline oracles (including the Delphic Sibyl) would have suggested, to an attentive reader, that this city had captured the author's attention.

Did Stalpart van der Wiele and his circle intend to remind the Latinate Dutch of their familiar (but perhaps already partly forgotten) reli-

¹¹⁵ Budzisz, *Biblia i tradycja antyczna*, p. 24.

¹¹⁶ Erasmus, *Poems* (ed. by Miller, Vredevelde), pp. 646-648.

¹¹⁷ Budzisz, *Biblia i tradycja antyczna*, p. 22.

gious-literary patrimony? Certainly, in the light of the Counter-Reformation, the re-evangelization of the northern Netherlands might have required such an unconventional strategy. The references to the Golden Age and Virgil's Fourth Eclogue were placed prominently in the first part of *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Jesu Christi*. The first leaves of the *Gulde-Jaer* were the part that a non-Catholic reader in the 17th century Netherlands was most likely to glance at if he picked up the book by accident or out of curiosity. If that accidental reader were a well-educated individual who responded to the events of classical mythology and felt at home in the poetry of Virgil and Horace, then his interest might be sustained to complete reading the introduction. Perhaps some echoes of training in the classics or of reading in contemporary Neo-Latin authors might have led this casual reader to give second thought to how the early Church revealed itself to the Gentiles? In that case, he would have involuntarily given further thought to key items of Catholic identity, such as the Apostolic Succession, the Communion of Saints, the unity of the Roman Catholic Church or Her unchanging presence from the beginning to the present day.

About such a hypothetical reading of Stalpart van der Wiele's *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Jesu Christi* or *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen* we can only speculate, for next to nothing is known at all about the actual reception of these songbooks. We have hardly any evidence about the Catholics who read them, and none at all regarding a non-Catholic audience. However, based on indications such as these, we can plausibly raise the possibility that Stalpart van der Wiele's program of rebuilding Catholic identity, as a matter of fact, did leave open the possibility of addressing classically-educated readers who might not have been Catholic (perhaps through their Catholic friends), and that this was the main reason why the author of *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Jesu Christi* condensed so many classical literary tropes in his prologue.¹¹⁸

Stalpart's project to nourish the Catholic identity of his readers breathed an atmosphere of erudite cultural unity born out of the syncretic thought of the Renaissance and transformed by the Counter-Reformation. Even prior to the Renaissance, Catholic intellectuals such as Dante believed that some Greeks and Romans had caught a glimpse of the truth of Jesus Christ, obtaining this premonition through reasoning

¹¹⁸ This would have not been an exception in Stalpart van der Wiele's polemical writings. It appears that Stalpart van der Wiele, while holding a negative view of heresy, expressed a sympathetic and charitable attitude towards individuals representing other religions. The intra-religious debate in *Roomsche Reijs*, for instance, ends with the Catholic Pieter inviting the Calvinist Habbakuk to have a friendly drink of wine, p. 421.

(as in the case of Aristotle) or through a poetic vision and by being good men (the main example here was Virgil). Dante chose Virgil for his role of a guide in the *Divina Commedia* because the Roman poet represented to him the archetype of the pagan thinker who, while not saved, had intuited part of the truth of Christ owing to a sincere mind and forthright moral instinct. Some scholars of the Renaissance treated the Fourth Eclogue of Virgil and related Sibylline oracles as analogous to the prophecies of the Old Testament. The Renaissance belief in the authenticity of the Sibylline prophecies inspired Michelangelo to place a likeness of the Sibyls of Cumae and Eritrea alongside the Biblical prophets on the vaulted ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. A vast collection of Sibylline literature was published in Greek by the German humanist Sixtus Betuleius (Birken) in 1545. A Latin translation by Sebastianus Castellio (a French Protestant and one-time companion of John Calvin) appeared in 1546 with the same printer, Johannes Oporinus, in Basel.¹¹⁹ In the Netherlands around 1601, Crispijn van de Passe the Elder executed a series of eighteen plates representing the Christianized Sibyls;¹²⁰ etchings of the Sibyls were also made after Italian models by Nicolas van Aelst¹²¹ and Hendrik Goltzius.¹²² An English series of prints illustrating the Sibylline prophecies and modeled on those of Crispijn van de Passe was published around 1620 by Martin Droeshout.¹²³

In his version of the prophecy of the Sibyl of Cumae Virgil offered the concept of a cyclical return by which humanity was to enjoy a new Golden Age. Out of Virgil's Fourth Eclogue Stalpart van der Wiele created a Christian paraphrase:

Eerst ende alvooren verdeeldt hebbende de eeuwen ofte de ouderdommen des werlds na de verscheydenheyt der metalen, yser, koper, silver, &c. vergelijcket sy de laetste eeuw, overmits de Gheboorte Christi, die daer inne soude verschynen, by het goud, het dierste van allen; ten aensien van

¹¹⁹ Betuleius, *Sibyllinorum oraculorum libri octo*, Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1545. Castellio, *Sibyllina oracula de Graeco in Latinum conversa, et in eadem annotiatioes. Sebastiano Castalione interprete*, Basel: Johannes Oporinus, 1546.

¹²⁰ Van de Passe, *Duodecim sibyllarum icones elegantarum*, s.n., s.l. [Cologne (?)], 1601. British Museum reg. no. 1875.0710.307.

¹²¹ See e.g. 'Sybilla Cumaea' by Nicolas van Aelst after Raffaello Schiaminosi (1609). British Museum reg. no. V.10.85.

¹²² See e.g. 'Due Sybille' by Hendrik Goltzius after Polidoro da Caravaggio (c. 1592). British Museum reg. no. 1862.1211.119.

¹²³ Droeshout, *Duodecim sibyllarum icones: the prophecies of the twelue sybills, plainly foretelling the incarnation, birth, life, death and coming againe to iudgment of our Lord and Sauour Iesus Christ*, London: Roger Daniell, [c. 1620-1625].

de menighvuldighe gaven, gunsten ende weldaden, daer mede desen Nieu-ghebooren Koningh ons van den Hemel ghesonden, ende uyt eene Maget gheboren, de wereld soude komen rijcken, ende meer als tot haer oorspronckelijcke luyster verbeteren. In der voeghen dat van dier tydt af, door den gantschen aerdbodem op soude rijsen een vergulde nacy, verciert, midts de alderheylighste wetten, geboden ende raden Christi, met schoone ende Hemelsche manieren van leven.¹²⁴

Having divided the ages or antiquity of the world beforehand according to the various metals, iron, copper, silver, etc., she [=the Sibyl] compares the last age, owing to the birth of Christ, which would then take place, to gold, the dearest of all; with regard to the great many gifts and abundant grace, with which this new King, sent to us from heaven and born out of a Virgin, will enrich the world and restore it to more than its original glorious condition. To this it may be added that since then throughout the entire world a golden nation will rise up, adorned not only in the holiest laws, in the commandments and advice of Christ, but also in a beautiful and heavenly way of life.

The narrative of a new Golden Age closely mirrored the history of salvation. The Fourth Eclogue promised that after the birth of the new infant king a new generation (*nova progenies*, *Ecl.* IV, 7) would be sent from heaven, and a 'golden race' (*gens aurea*, *Ecl.* IV, 9) would arise, while the earth would bring forth all kinds of precious fruit (*Ecl.* IV, 19-30). Virgil's words were now translated to refer to the abundance of grace and spiritual gifts bestowed by Christ upon humanity. An additional light was shed on the prophecy of the Sibyl by the prophecy of Isaiah where Christian commentators (including St. Ambrose, whose words on this subject were paraphrased by Stalpart van der Wiele) detected a striking analogy in terms of expression ('Den H. Gheest, altijd ghedachtigh sijnder woorden, soo S. Ambrosius seyt, heeft dit selvige, ende onder de selve figuer van spreken ghepropheteert door Isaiam cap. 35.').¹²⁵ Christ's victory over death (in the Passion, Crucifixion and Resurrection) anticipated His ultimate victory in the Second Coming, a material sign of which will be the physical resurrection of the dead. Stalpart van der Wiele echoed Virgil's image of a world at peace with itself (*Ecl.* IV, 37-45), writing in a fragment interspersed with brief references to St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians (4:13) and St. Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (22, 15):

Item, soo wanneer desen nieu-geboren Koning geworden soude zyn eenen man van ghesetten ende volwassen ouderdom, dat alsdan de aerde niet meer ghebout, de zee niet meer bevaren, de wyngaerd niet meer gesnoeyt,

¹²⁴ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, pp. 56-57.

¹²⁵ Stalpart van der Wiele, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

de wol niet meer gheverruwt, noch gheenigerley arbeyd meer gedaen, ofte pyn gheleden en soude werden. Het welck ghebeuren sal na de leeringhe *Pauli* in't Landt der levenden, daer Christus in zijn geestelyck lichaem der heyligher Kercke, bekomen sal zijn ghesetten ende volwassen ouderdom, als wy-luyden na de alghemene verrysenisse, aldaer malkanderen sullen komen te ontmoeten in een volmaeckte mannelycke stature, op de maet van den ouderdom Christi. Alhier is 't dat voorts aen gerust sal worden van allen arbeydt, en daer men sonder meer te vloeyen of te dryven door de onsekere golven van dit onstuymighe leven, ghestadelyck ghenieten sal d'onghemetene wellust van de eeuwighen saligheydt: Hemel ende Aerde vernieut, ende alle de creaturen die hier versucht hebben haer overgedrongen slaverny, sich verblydende over haer verlossinghe, ende de heerlycke vrydom van de kinderen Godts.¹²⁶

When this newborn King becomes a man of ripe and mature age, the earth will not be tilled any longer, ships will not set sail, the vineyards will not be pruned, wool will not be dyed, no work of any kind will be done, nor will there be any suffering to be endured. This will happen, as St. Paul teaches, in the land of the living, where Christ, in His spiritual body of the holy Church, will be made manifest in His ripe and mature age, when after the general resurrection we will meet one another in perfect human form, according to the measure of the age of Christ. Then there will be rest from any kind of labor, one will be no longer swept up by the waves of this uncertain existence, but one shall perpetually experience the unbounded joys of eternal life: Heaven and earth [shall be] renewed, and all creatures which sighed here under the yoke of slavery, [will be found] rejoicing over their liberation and over the wonderful freedom of the children of God.

Conflating the pronouncements of Virgil (*Ecl.* IV, 31-33) with a realistic assessment of a Christian individual's life on earth, Stalpart remarked that the coming of Christ will not cause a revolutionary change in all humankind; the imperfections inherent in humanity and in the natural world will remain. For those who accept the Messiah, however, there will no longer be an obstacle to attaining perfection despite living in less than ideal surroundings:

Niet te min alsoo de Christelycke discipline, op haer alder-volmaeckste, niet al-omme even wel gheplant en soude konnen worden in de gemoed-eren der aerdsche menschen; Dat mede de ghenade van den Nieu-gebooren Koningh, de natuer ende de nooddruftighe behoeften desselfs, niet wegne-men en soude, maer verbeteren ende volmaken, soo souden daeromme van d'eene zyde noch efter overblyven eenige litteycken vande voorgaende quetsuren, als van oorlogen, vyandschappen, eergiericheyden, bemuringen

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

van steden, &c. ende van d'andere, eenighe weynighe ende wel-ghematigde noodzakelyckheyden van landbouwinghen, navigatien, verhandeligen ende dierghelycke eerlycke ghenenighen, die in haer selven niet quaedt en zyn, maer door onse ongherymde tochten, quaedt pleghen te worden.¹²⁷

Nevertheless, Christian discipline at its most perfect will not be planted equally well everywhere in the bosoms of men on earth. What is more, the grace of the Newborn King will not remove the nature and the necessary needs of mankind, but improve and perfect them; therefore, on the one hand, the scars of previously inflicted wounds will remain, that is to say, wars, enmity, prideful behavior, walled towns, etc., whereas on the other hand [there will still be a need for] some activities carried out in moderation, such as agriculture, navigation, commerce, and other such honest trades which are not evil in themselves, but which are liable to become evil owing to our ill-considered efforts.

Stalpart van der Wiele gave a Christian interpretation to the words of Virgil stating that there shall be another Argo and another Achilles shall venture against Troy (*Ecl.* IV, 33-36):

Item, datter ten tyde van desen gheboren Koningh, een tweeden *Argo*, dat is, een seer uytghelesen schip, in zee ghebracht soude werden, op de bestieringe van een anderen *Tiphys*, eenen seer ervaren Pilot, daer inne dat varen ende overschepen soudent alle de vrome ende uytgesochte Helden, te weten, alle de zielen der uytverkorenen, die met het schip der Kercke Christi, op het roer Petri seylende dwars door de stormen van vervolgingen, ende zandt-platen van Ketteryen, sullen komen te winnen het Gulde Vlies van 't hemelsche Colchis.¹²⁸

At the time of the birth of this King a second Argo, that is to say, a very fine ship will be launched, steered by another Typhis, a highly-skilled pilot, in which all pious and extraordinary heroes, to wit, all the souls of the chosen shall make the passage; sailing on board the ship of the Church of Christ, with St. Peter holding the rudder, straight through the storms of persecution and [avoiding] the sandbanks of heresies, they shall attain the Golden Fleece of the heavenly Colchis.

The 'new Achilles' will be Christ, whose mission is to 'vanquish the world and its prince (=Satan) with the weapon of the holy Cross' ('[...] om de wereltdt ende de Princen des selfs te bemachtigen door het wapen des

¹²⁷ Stalpart van der Wiele, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* For a contextualization of the motif of the Barque of St. Peter in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Catholic literature from the Netherlands, see above, **Chapter 7.2.**

heylighen Kruys').¹²⁹ The Church, in unity with Christ who victoriously waged war on sin and death, exists by virtue of an unbroken apostolic succession, symbolically embodied in the Barque of St. Peter. Ultimately, this vessel, among whose passengers are the saints of heroic virtue, will reach Colchis, a destination which stood in Stalpart's exegesis as a *topos* of Christian salvation. The gold of sainthood was therefore the prize (the Golden Fleece) awaiting those who completed this quest.

By this heroic imagery Stalpart van der Wiele sought to instill the Catholic identity of his Dutch parishioners in Delft with a new vitality, reassuring them of the victory of Christ and His Church. In an unbroken continuity with the past, nourished by the example of the saints, the mission of the Church in the present was to prepare the world for the future coming of Christ at the end of times. Life in the new Golden Age could become more moral through Christian discipline, even though the human propensity to evil was not removed. What Stalpart van der Wiele was keen to emphasize, therefore, was the lasting need to make moral choices. Since human nature remained fallible, this new Christian age would require of all mankind a profound striving for personal holiness. An overwhelming emphasis was placed, therefore, in Stalpart van der Wiele's literary project of reviving Catholic identity, on personal sainthood: imitating the individuals who most heroically exemplified the efforts to embody Christ's truth in their own lives.

The Age of Christianity, as presented by Stalpart, had only one historical beginning, the birth of Christ, and only one historical conclusion, the Second Coming of Christ at the end of time. It belonged to the history of human salvation, and it was identical with the uninterrupted history of the Church. We can see Stalpart, as it were, as a seventeenth-century Dutch spokesman for a 'hermeneutic of continuity'¹³⁰ expressing the intrinsic historical and spiritual unity of the Church founded by Christ. In this hermeneutic Christ always was, is and shall be present in 'His spiritual body of the holy Church' ('sijn geestelyck lichaem der heyligher Kercke').¹³¹

¹²⁹ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, p. 58.

¹³⁰ The concept of a 'hermeneutic of reform' was introduced by Pope Benedict XVI and contrasted with a 'hermeneutic of discontinuity' in his Address to the Roman Curia, 22 December 2005. The former is called, synonymously, a 'hermeneutic of continuity' in Pope Benedict XVI's Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis*, 22 February 2007, n. 6.

¹³¹ Stalpart van der Wiele, *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*, p. 59.

AFTERWORD

Literature is incomprehensible when it is not embedded in history (social history, the history of culture, etc.), but history is just as incomprehensible without literary voices. These are, of course, not only the voices of those in centers of power, or in the mainstream of literary canons, but also of those who are marginalized or forgotten. One group that underwent an abrupt transition from majority to minority in a space of two hundred years between 1450 and 1650 was the Roman Catholic population of Holland.

At the beginning of this period Delft was a remarkable town, even though, in other respects, it was quite unremarkable among the other Holland towns that sprang into being during the 13th century. Although it had never been the seat of higher ecclesiastical authority, during the later Middle Ages Delft became the setting of many religious events that impressed on the minds of its inhabitants and of the people of Holland its Catholic character. The city was the destination of regional pilgrimages to its several figures of Christ and the Virgin Mary which were renowned for their miracles: Our Lady of Jesse at the Church of St. Hippolyte (the Old Church or *Oude Kerk*), Our Lady of Sorrows at the Church of St. Ursula (the New Church or *Nieuwe Kerk*) and others. The Church of St. Ursula was in itself built on a miracle and on the perseverance of a small group of pious lay people. Delft was the dwelling-place of the beguine mystic Geertruyd van Oosten, a stigmatic whose cult enjoyed a strong local following through the late Middle Ages into the Early-Modern Period. It was a local center of the devotion to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, a popular form of Catholic worship in the late-medieval and early-modern Netherlands. Consequently, Delft became a regional center of the production and distribution of religious literature in the vernacular and in Latin, both through its scriptoria and, after 1477, through its printing workshops. Delft was home to several priestly authors of religious literature (letters and *miracula*, homilies, manuals of practical theology, devotional verse, etc.), and to readers, both lay and religious, who could avail themselves of a number of libraries and book collections.

All this changed abruptly after the Dutch Revolt. Yet the strong ties of Delft to the Church had not been entirely severed, and its Catholic literary voices survived. Delft was remarkable for the fact that during the Dutch Revolt it had been chosen by William of Orange as his Holland residence. However, on the opposing pole to that represented by William of Orange, Delft was no less unique for having been chosen as the place of residence by the foremost champion of the Church in Holland, the Apostolic Vicar of the Netherlands, bishop of Philippi *in partibus infidelium*, Sasbout Vosmeer. The printing and publishing of Catholic literature, no longer possible in Delft, moved to the southern Netherlands. All through the late 16th and 17th century, Delft hosted tens of missionaries, Hollanders and Flemings, diocesan priests and members of religious orders (esp. Jesuits), a sign of its leading role as a center of Catholic life in the south-western part of Holland.

Owing to such factors as a large Roman Catholic population, strong Catholic traditions and an almost continuous presence of Catholic clergy, Delft stood out among other Holland towns. In proportion to its literary output as a whole, during the Dutch Golden Age writers from Delft produced a fairly large and qualitatively high-ranking corpus of Catholic religious literature. In the first decades of the 17th century most of this corpus was the work of two men, the Jesuit father Ludovicus Makeblijde, and Johannes Stalpart van der Wiele, the diocesan priest responsible for pastoral care in Delft and environs. Where Makeblijde sought to combine traditional catechesis with spiritual meditation in the tradition of St. Ignatius Loyola, Stalpart van der Wiele's literary texts were aimed at rebuilding Catholic identity among the faithful by restoring (and renewing) their understanding the history, doctrine and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church. In the concept of a Christian *aurea aetas* Stalpart van der Wiele found a focal-point for his discourse of reviving Catholic identity in Holland.

Although the Holland Catholics had been marginalized, the production and reception of literature nevertheless retained continuity with the period before 1572. Despite the general picture of dissolution of Catholic life (especially in the first two decades after the Dutch Revolt), there existed a strong ability to recuperate. We find this to be the case on the level of the production and reception of literature, on the level of literary networks formed by personal relations and by an affinity of ideas. Especially with regard to the latter, many Catholic authors were like the 'householder, who bringeth forth out of his treasure new things and old' (Mt. 13:52), reviving familiar themes in continuity with the past and

adapting them to the needs of new readers in a changed socio-cultural environment.

The hypothesis of a community of ideas relevant to Catholic religious literature finds confirmation in the central thematic areas that emerge from a systematic study of this category of literature produced in Delft:

The devotion of the Seven Sorrows and miracles. Evidence of the continuity of this devotion can be found in Delft up to the 1560s or even later in the work of Cornelis Musius. In general, this devotion should be seen as intrinsic to the Roman Catholic Church, and not as a specifically Netherlandish phenomenon, nor as one sustained solely or even predominantly by the political involvement of the Habsburg dynasty. Signs of the continuity of the Seven Sorrows devotion in Delft after the Dutch Revolt can be found in the writings of Michael Vosmeer (c. 1600) and, possibly, in the work of Stalpart van der Wiele, who alluded to the theology of the suffering Mother of God in his song for Good Friday (c. 1620-1630).

Scriptural religious polemic from a Roman Catholic perspective. This category of persuasive discourse begins (contrary to the opinion of R.R. Post)¹ even before the Dutch Revolt in the northern Netherlands, in the writings of Martinus Duncanus (residing in Delft from 1558 to 1572); it is continued by Stalpart van der Wiele (e.g. in *Roomsche reijs*), and then, during the mid-17th century, by a Catholic layman, Arnout van Geluwe, a Flemish immigrant in Delft, in apologetic literature describing (or simulating) debates with Calvinists.

The life of Geertruyd van Oosten. The *Leuven vita*, attributed with some certainty to Sasbout Vosmeer, should be situated in the realities of beguine spirituality in continuity with medieval devotion around the Passion of Christ (a constant theme of Catholic literature produced in Delft before the Reformation). Hagiography was enriched in the post-Tridentine era by a new emphasis on moral instruction (*parenesis*) and theological teaching (*catechesis*). The themes in the *Leuven vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten owed their survival to the existence of similar communities of readers and listeners; one can mention here, for instance, the beguinages of Delft and Leuven. Where the transmission of texts is concerned, the *vita* of Geertruyd van Oosten offered inspiration not only to Sasbout Vosmeer but also to Stalpart van der Wiele and to other hagiographers of the Counter-Reformation in the Netherlands, as well as to the Calvinist historian of Delft, Dirck Evertsz van Bleyswijck.

Hagiography. A study of religious literature from Delft reveals a profound interest in hagiography on the part of Catholic writers and read-

¹ Post, *Handboek van de kerkgeschiedenis*, vol. iii, p. 230.

ers, especially with regard to the role of saints as models of an ideal Christian life. The figure of St. Willibrord offers a persuasive example of the continuity of this line of literature in Delft. To begin with, we encounter the translations of Jacobus de Voragine's *Aurea legenda* (the *Passionael*, of which many editions were published in Delft); we obtain a brief glance of the saint in Nerdenus's *Dialogus*, where we see the first signs of a Dutch humanist's interest in the Christian identity of Delft and Holland. In the mid- to late 16th century Sasbout Vosmeer displays an interest in the saint's life – first as a young cleric and priest, and then, by undertaking actions as Vicar Apostolic to propagate the cult of various Dutch saints. Finally, there is Stalpart van der Wiele's authorship of a vast and thematically-diverse corpus of hagiographic songbooks, where the 'gold' of sainthood has been situated in the eschatological perspective of a 'Golden Age' of Christianity.

The motif of the Sibyls and the related theme of Delft as a name-sake of ancient Delphi. Here, we can draw a continuous line from Nerdenus' *Dialogus* (1517), through a counter-reaction coming from a Protestant-humanist angle (Junius, Van Hout, Barlaeus and others), to its affirmation by Stalpart van der Wiele's *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heren Iesu Christi* (1628), central to which is the theme of a new Christian Golden Age foretold by the Sibyls (including the Sibyl of Delphi). Where some authors criticized the motif of the oracle of Delphi, even using it to attack the Catholic tradition (esp. Van Hout), on the Catholic side Stalpart van der Wiele resorted to the prophecies of Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, with more profound implications, as an additional argument about the truth of Christ's message of salvation addressed to non-believers.

These shared thematic areas reveal not only a continuity of Catholic literature in Delft both before and after the Dutch Revolt. Most of all, these areas offer evidence of an ongoing and beneficial exchange of ideas: between geographically distant areas (Holland and other regions of the Netherlands; Holland and other areas of Europe); between literature in the vernacular and in Latin; finally, between individuals, especially between networks of readers or listeners and authors of religious literature.

Catholic lives during the Dutch Golden Age were like and yet unlike those of their non-Catholic neighbors. Sometimes forgotten and yet unmistakably at the center of so many political events and literary discourses, Catholics in the young Dutch Republic epitomized a group placed 'on the margins of society'². According to the law of the land, they could believe what they wanted (up to a certain point), provided

² Parker, 'In Partibus Infidelium', p. 122.

that they did not express their beliefs publicly – or, in other words, as long as they did not try to worship *as Catholics*. And yet, the ‘Papists’ (*Paepschen*), as the Catholics were called by their opponents, stood by what their hearts and minds told them was the true faith. Undaunted by the self-contradictory position assigned to them, the Catholics in the Dutch Republic (and especially Holland), expressed their religious devotion, their traditions and history through literature, writing their lives into an altogether different ‘Golden Age’. In the wider scheme of things, Catholic literary networks were sustained by their unity with the Roman Catholic Church and nourished by the Church’s literary and cultural traditions. The activities of Catholic readers, writers and publishers are a moving example of how a religious group fought a successful struggle to survive a fundamental crisis in the ‘microcosm’ of a Holland town during the 16th and 17th century.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Delft's Old Church (of St. Hippolyte) is where the literary networks of Delft converged during the later Middle Ages. The inhabitants of the parish of St. Hippolyte's church were the wealthiest citizens. These burghers comprised a majority of the producers and consumers of literature: among them were parish priests, members of religious confraternities, and representatives of various lay professions. Dirck van Bleyswijck's *Beschryvinge der stad Delft* (2 vols., 1667-1681), from which this etching is taken, is one of the most comprehensive early-modern printed sources on the history and culture of Delft.

Dirck Evertsz van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft* (Delft: Arnold Bon, 1667), vol. i, fol. 132A.

Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LB KUN: RAR T DELFT 1 1.

2. The New Church (of St. Ursula) was founded in response to a miraculous vision in 1381. Thanks to its two churches, both of which housed important sacred images, Delft evolved into a prominent regional destination for pilgrimages. The miracles at the churches of St. Hippolyte and St. Ursula stimulated the cult of the Virgin Mary and the devotion to Christ in the Passion. The literature related to these miracles, as well as chronicles and other documents, is an important sub-category of later-medieval religious texts from Delft.

Dirck Evertsz van Bleyswijck, *Beschryvinge der stad Delft* (Delft: Arnold Bon, 1667), vol. i, p. 190A.

Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, LB KUN: RAR T DELFT 1 1.

3. Founded in the early 15th century, the chapel of the House of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit represented one of the many charitable institutions of late-medieval Delft. Now the Roman Catholic Chapel of St. Hippolyte (*Sint-Hippolytuskapel*).

Photo: M. Polkowski.

4. The East Gate (*Oostpoort*) is the only late-Gothic city gate of Delft that has survived to this day. The early 15th century was a time when the

city of Delft entered a period of economic expansion. A large proportion of the material infrastructure which sustained a vibrant literary life in the city was created during this time.

Photo: M. Polkowski.

5. During the later Middle Ages Delft was a center of book copying and illuminating. This miniature *en grisaille* of St. Ursula of Cologne (the patron saint of the New Church) protecting the 11.000 Virgins comes from a Book of Hours (use of Utrecht) made in Delft by the Master of the Delft Grisailles, c. 1440-1460.

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 74 G 35, fol. 102r.

6. This scene of the Annunciation from a Book of Hours from Delft (c. 1460-1480) is set in the interior of a Gothic church or chapel (a wooden rood-screen – an equivalent of the *iconostasis* in the Eastern Church – can be discerned in the background, between the nave and the chancel). This miniature is the work of a follower of the Adair Master (c. 1490-1500).

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 133 E 19, fol. 50r.

7. This leaf of an illuminated manuscript the Hundred Articles of the Passion contains a series of devotional meditations by the Dominican mystic Henry Suso. Texts intended to stimulate the contemplation of the Passion of Christ belong to a prominent sub-category of religious literature from Delft. The red and blue pen-flourishes and border ornaments are a characteristic feature of the Delft style of manuscript decoration.

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 135 E 22, fol. 122r.

8. The Five Holy Wounds of Christ (in the middle the Heart of Christ) in the margin of the same leaf. The text on the banderole reads: 'O suete hart *Christi* weest gegruet' ('Praised be the sweet heart of Christ').

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 135 E 22, fol. 122r (detail).

9. Many religious books in Dutch belonged to convents and religious communities, and were used for religious instruction, collective reading and private devotion. A library, of which the inventory has been preserved, existed at the convent of St. Barbara in Delft: 'Die sijn die studier boeke die in die liberie horen. Int conuent van sinte barbaren binnen delf besloten in hollant' ('These are the books that belong to the library [of] the convent of St. Barbara in Delft').

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 130 E 24, fol. 2r.

10. Libraries, such as the one shown on the title leaf of the Dutch translation of Jacobus de Voragine's *Aurea Legenda*, the *Passionael*, printed in Delft by Christiaen Snellaert, were not uncommon in later-medieval Delft (another library existed at the Old Church). This image of the interior of a late-medieval library shows two devout readers, one of whom, a man, is praying to Christ. It demonstrates the spirit of harmony between reading and devotion that the makers of religious literature aspired to achieve and instill in their audiences. Hagiographic literature, an example of which is Snellaert's edition of the *Passionael*, is one of the bridges spanning the later-medieval and early-modern period in Catholic religious literature from Delft.

Passionael: Winterstuck, (Delft: Christiaen Snellaert, 1489), title leaf.
Gouda, Streekarchief Midden Holland, 2306 B 9-10.

11. *Die hystorie vanden grooten Coninck Alexander (Historia Alexandri Magni)* was one of the relatively very few secular books published by the Delft printer Christiaen Snellaert at the turn of the 15th and 16th century. Reproduced here is Snellaert's device, a winged unicorn (a mythical beast symbolically associated with the Virgin Mary) under the heraldic emblem of Delft.

In: *Die hystorie vanden grooten Coninck Alexander* (Delft: Christiaen Snellaert, 1491), fol. 53v.
The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 172 C 22.

12. Jacobus Stratijs' translation of Jan van Coudenberghe's devotional treatises, *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weenen*, is an important source containing Dirck Adamsz van der Burch's letters and descriptions of miracles that happened in Delft in conjunction with the cult of the Virgin Mary of the Seven Sorrows.

In: Jacobus Stratijs, Georgius Colvenarius, *Onse L. Vrouwe der seven weenen* (Antwerp: Guiliam Lesteens, 1622), title leaf.
Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, THO: WRT-48-310.

13. In the devotion of the Seven Sorrows in Delft and elsewhere in the Netherlands, the cult of the Virgin Mary converged with the worship of the Passion of Christ. This devotional image was printed in 1511 to commemorate the miracles that occurred in Delft in connection with these devotions. The image is structured as a late-gothic altar, above which are the heraldic emblems of Delft and an unidentified town or individual. In the topmost niche of the altar is the Virgin Mary with Child. Below, on the left and right (beginning in the lower-left hand cor-

ner), are the scenes of the Seven Sorrows: the Presentation in the Temple; the Flight into Egypt, Christ in the Temple, the Way of the Cross, the Crucifixion and Burial; the central panel represents Christ Taken Down from the Cross. Below are two angels holding a cartouche of Christ as the Man of Sorrows with the *Arma Christi* – the instruments of the Passion. Underneath the altar is the sign of the artist, Monogrammist II with the Death's Head.

Amsterdam, Rijksprentenkabinet.

14. This image can be compared to a slightly similar one, but not identified as coming from Delft, where the scenes of the Seven Sorrows are also represented in an altar but amid winding ornaments resembling the branches of a tree, perhaps the Tree of Jesse associated with Delft's *Maria Jesse*. The author of this woodcut is identified by the monogram I and the sign of a knife.

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15. The devotions to the Passion of Christ and the Sorrows of the Virgin Mary are two interconnected themes of literature and religious art commissioned in Delft during the mid-16th century. The sorrowful Virgin Mary is the central figure in a group surrounding the body of Christ in this altar-panel by Maerten van Heemskerck (1566).

Courtesy of Delft, Museum Het Prinsenhof (this painting was acquired by Museum Het Prinsenhof with the assistance of Vereniging Rembrandt).

16. Humanist scholarship and Christian piety reached a harmonious balance in Lucas Nerdenus' Latin dialogue of Mercury and Apollo. Here, Delft, whose name was Latinized as Delphi, was celebrated as a worthy successor of the ancient Delphi in Greece and as a center of learning. The latter was a reference to the fact that the oracle of Delphi was dedicated to the god Apollo, the patron of the arts. Noteworthy is the bilingual title in Latin and Greek. A woodcut on the title leaf of this booklet shows a man praying the rosary (a new form of devotion at that time), next to an image of the Virgin Mary with the Child Jesus. This might be a reference to the fact that during the later Middle Ages Delft became a notable regional pilgrimage destination where devotees prayed before miraculous images of the Virgin Mary such as *Maria Jesse* at the Old Church (of St. Hippolyte).

Lucas Nerdenus, *Inter Apollinem et Mercurium dialogus fabulosus de prima ciuitatis Delphorum apud Hollandos origine* (Delft: Cornelis Henricz Lettersnijder, 1517), title leaf.

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek pfl 16.

17. Classical and Christian themes co-exist in this painting of the Nativity by the Master of Delft. Two female figures believed to be the ancient Sibyls offer homage to the newborn Christ. Because the Latinized name of Delft was Delphi (Batavorum), and the ancient Greek Delphi was the site of an oracle where the Sibyl, a priestess of the god Apollo, foretold future events, the motif of the Sibyls therefore entered the identity of early-modern Delft. This motif had become tied up with the coming of Christianity because the Sibylline prophecies, especially the one in Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, were widely interpreted by Christians as announcing the birth of Christ. Such prophecies were known to Christian readers of saints' lives (esp. the *Aurea legenda*); meanwhile, directly inspired by Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, Erasmus and other Renaissance humanists resorted to the themes of the Sibylline oracles and the revelation of a new Christian Golden Age in their religious verse.

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

18. The Erythraean Sibyl was painted by Maerten van Heemskerck (1564). This image, inspired by the Italian art of the Renaissance, was perhaps intended to be one of the wings of an uncompleted altar (it remained in a church in Delft until 1566). The Sibyl is portrayed in an imaginary mountainous landscape, but the city in the distance is clearly modeled on Delft as it appeared in the mid-16th century.

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

19. A map of Holland from the early 17th century.

Ludovico Guicciardini, *Caerten [...] uit de Beschrijvinghe van alle de Nederlanden*. Utrecht: Abraham van Herwijck, 1617.

20. A narrow alley in the vicinity of the convent of St. Agatha (now Museum Het Prinsenhof) in Delft. The chapel of the convent is to the right.

Photo: M. Polkowski

21. The rector of the convent of St. Agatha, Cornelius Musius, a humanist and celebrated author of Latin religious verse, became one of the earliest victims of the Revolt in Delft. Print by Johannes Wierix (1570).

Copyright by the Trustees of the British Museum.

22. A relief fleet of the Sea Beggars (*Watergeuzen*) sets sail from Delft towards the besieged town of Leiden. On 3 October 1574 the Span-

ish troops under Louis de Requesens encircling Leiden were forced to surrender their fortified emplacements to the Sea Beggars. The nearby countryside had been inundated to facilitate the transport of troops and materiel. Etching by Frans Hogenberg (1576).

Copyright by the Trustees of the British Museum.

23. The assassination of William of Orange by Balthasar Gérard on 10 July 1584 at the former convent of St. Agatha in Delft. Print by Jan Luyken after Romeyn de Hooghe. An illustration to the second volume of Pieter Christiaensz Bor's *Nederlandsche Oorlogen* (Amsterdam, 1680)

Copyright by the Trustees of the British Museum.

24. Sasbout Vosmeer (1548-1614), the Apostolic Vicar of the Holland Mission (*Missio Hollandica*). Shown next to Vosmeer's portrait is his es-cutcheon and initials. Engraving by Johannes Wierix (1598).

Copyright by the Trustees of the British Museum.

25. For the beleaguered Catholics in the northern provinces of the Netherlands after the Revolt, the figure of St. Willibrord, the first bishop of Utrecht, came to symbolize the new program of the Counter-Reformation, whose most important elements were missionary activity and the re-invigoration of the faith in profound unity with Rome. St. Willibrord is presented here as a bishop, wearing a richly-embroidered alb and cope, holding a staff and a model of the Cathedral of Utrecht. St. Willibrord was recognized as a model to be followed by Sasbout Vosmeer, Apostolic Vicar of Holland in the years after the Revolt. An etching by Cornelis Bloemaert after Abraham Bloemaert (c. 1626).

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26. The title leaf of the *vita* of the venerable Geertruyd van Oosten, a Delft beguine. This *vita* was compiled out of a variety of sources most probably by Sasbout Vosmeer in cooperation with his brother Tilman, and published at Louvain in 1589. The booklet was probably written to propagate the Catholic religious identity of Delft by combining moral instruction with religious catechesis. Outside Delft, its readers can be sought in the circles of the beguines, most especially in the southern Netherlands, but also in the northern provinces, where such religious communities had survived largely intact. The etching on the title leaf shows Geertruyd praying before a life-size figure of Christ on the Cross shortly before receiving the stigmata.

Attrib. to Sasbout Vosmeer, *Het leuen van die Heylighe ende waerdighe maecht Geertruyd van Oosten*, title leaf.

Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek THO: RAR 2-83 dl 4.

27. One of the sources of the Leuven *vita* was the chronicle of Cornelis Aurelius. Illustrating the narrative of Geertruyd van Oosten in this chronicle is an almost identical etching as the one in the booklet published in 1589.

Cornelius Aurelius, *Die cronycke van Holland*, fol. 204v.

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 1084 A 6.

28. Was Geertruyd van Oosten named after a song that she frequently sang and which contained the word *oost*? Although this belief, circulating in early-modern *vitae*, has now been generally rejected by scholars, many variants, both religious and secular, of 'Het daghet inden Oosten' and similar religious dawn-songs (*alba*) were indeed sung by the inhabitants of religious communities. This miniature of a nun singing a song beginning with the words 'Ic sie den dach int oest opgaen' ('I see the day rising in the east') comes from the late-medieval songbook *Die gheestelicke melody*.

Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Ms. Ltk. 2058, fol. 36r.

29. After the Revolt the Catholics living in the northern provinces were not allowed to practice their faith in public. Their previous places of worship were confiscated and turned over to the Calvinists. This situation led to the building of clandestine churches (*schuilkerken*) disguised to look like private houses, an example of which is this church of the Jesuit station at the Oude Langendijk in Delft.

Pen-and-ink drawing by 'H.v.d. B.', late 17th c., Delft, Gemeentearchief.

30. Ludovicus Makeblijde, a Jesuit father from the southern Netherlands, was already a well-known author of Catholic religious literature before his arrival in Delft. After coming to Delft in 1611, Makeblijde organized an extensive missionary network and at the same time continued his literary activities. His hymn-book *Den berch der gheestelicker vreugden* appeared in 1618 across the border, in Antwerp, where much of the Catholic literature destined for the northern Netherlands was printed.

Ludovicus Makeblijde, *Den berch der gheestelicker vreugden*. Antwerp: Hieronymus Verdussen, 1618.

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 7 B 14, title leaf.

31. Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele's profound interest in saints' lives brought forth literary fruit in the form of a vast corpus of literature during his time as a priest in Delft from 1612 to 1630. His *Vrouwelick cieraet van Sint' Agnes versmaedt* was a prose tract on proper costume for women ('Kleed-Bericht') followed by a series of eighteen poems dealing with various episodes from the life of St. Agnes, the veneration of her relics in Rome and the transfer of these relics to Utrecht.

[Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele], *Vrouwelick cieraet van Sint' Agnes versmaedt*. 's Hertogenbosch: Anthoni Scheffer, 1622.

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 296 F 32, title leaf.

32. For the Jubilee celebrations of 1625 Stalpart van der Wiele wrote the *Roomsche Reijs*, a fictional dispute between Pieter, a Catholic, and Habbakuk, a 'precise' Calvinist (*fijnen broeder*) on several timely topics such as pilgrimages to Rome, the apostolic succession or the worship of relics. Its aim, if not to instruct readers how to carry on real debates, was to strengthen Catholic faith and identity in a non-Catholic environment by providing easy-to-follow explanations of the typical Catholic religious doctrines and practices.

[Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele], *Roomsche reijs. t'zamenspraecks-gewijs tusschen Pieter de Reijser ende Abacukijnen broeder*. 's Hertogenbosch: Jansz Scheffer (III), 1624.

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 296 F 32, title leaf.

33. Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele's *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi* was the first part of a planned two-volume series of songbooks connected by the common theme of a 'golden year'. *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi* contained songs that were to be sung on Sundays and movable holidays such as Easter. In the introduction to this songbook Stalpart van der Wiele situated the history of the world in a Christian eschatological perspective by recalling the theme of the Christian *aurea aetas*. An age of hope and salvation had been proclaimed independently to the Jews by the Hebrew prophets of the Old Testament, and by the Sibyls to the Greeks and Romans, the latter most memorably in Virgil's Fourth Eclogue as interpreted by the Christians. The etching on the title leaf shows an altar-like structure with figures of the four Evangelists standing to each side, while two scenes from the life of Christ, the Nativity and the Resurrection, are placed beneath and above in oval cartouches.

[Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele], *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi*. 's Hertogenbosch: Jansz Scheffer (III), 1628.

Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek, F qu 33 (rariora), title leaf.

34. Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele's second volume of songs, *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*, was dedicated to immovable feast-days, such as Christmas, and to the lives of saints. It appeared posthumously in 1634 and 1635; the title of the second edition reflected Stalpart van der Wiele's Christian eschatological vision projected upon a yearly cycle (the 'golden year') and the history of mankind (the Christian understanding of the concept of the Golden Age). The etching on the title leaf is most appropriate for a Catholic religious songbook. Above, in the presence of the divine Tetragrammaton, are the angelic choirs and groups of saints, while on both sides, angels are swinging censers. Underneath is an altar set with an altar-cloth upon which liturgical vessels, a chalice and a ciborium, are placed. The scene is completed by an ensemble of female musicians and singers holding musical instruments or songbooks.

[Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele], *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*. Antwerp: Jan Cnobbaert, 1635.

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 737 K 18, title leaf.

35. A leaf from Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele's *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen* with a song dedicated to St. Hippolyte (13 August) containing the text and musical notation.

[Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele], *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen*. Antwerp: Jan Cnobbaert, 1635.

The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 737 K 18, p. 771.

36. The Triumph of Christ (c. 1581-c. 1623), an etching by Johann Theodor de Bry after a design by Titian, represents in the form of a procession the historical unity and continuity of the Church. The procession begins with Adam and Eve and the Patriarchs, followed by Noah, David and the kings of the Old Testament. The Prophets are accompanied by the Sibyls.

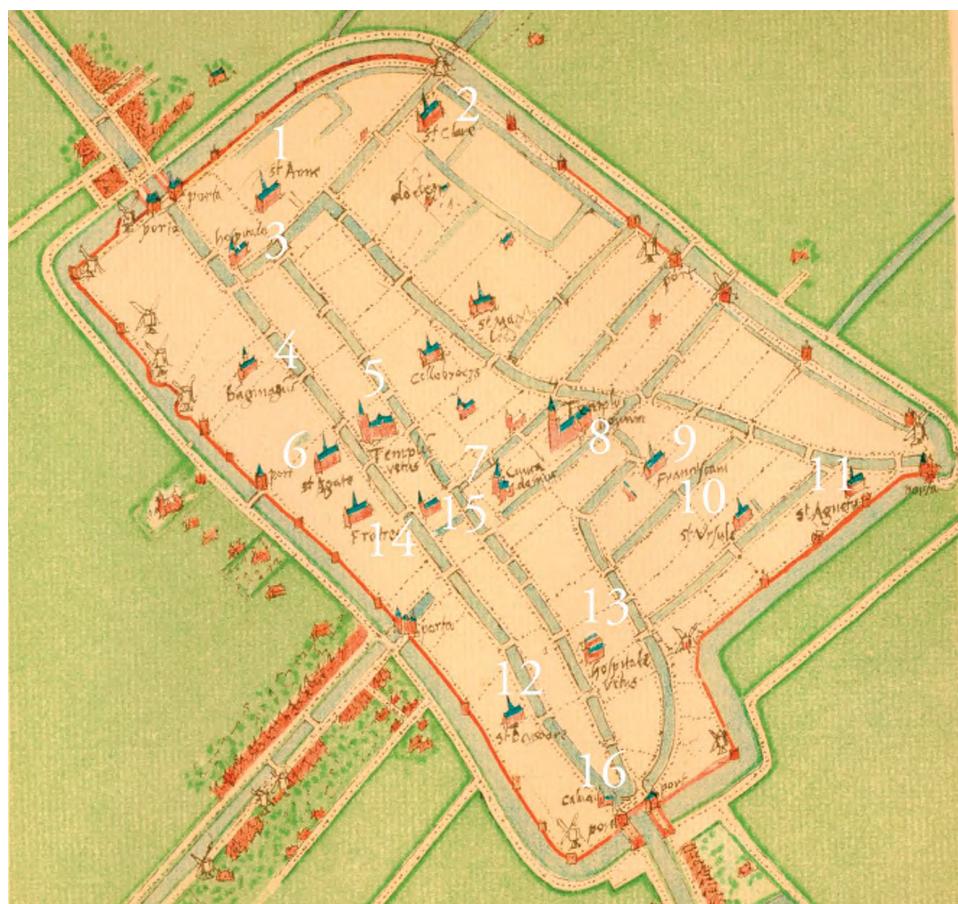
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (detail).

37. St. John the Baptist is shown carrying the Cross; Christ is surrounded by the Saints. From the Triumph of Christ by Johann Theodor de Bry.

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (detail).

38. The Apostles, Martyrs and Confessors complete the image of the unity of the Church. From the Triumph of Christ by Johann Theodor de Bry.

Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum (detail).



JACOB VAN DEVENTER'S MAP OF DELFT (1560)

The first known detailed map of Delft was made around 1560 by Charles V's court cartographer Jacob Roelofs van Deventer. This map shows the location of churches, cloisters, almshouses and civic institutions on the eve of the Dutch Revolt. The image reproduced here is a 19th century copy of the original draft preserved at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid. A numbered legend has been added by the author of the present study.

Delft, Gemeentearchief.

Legend

1. Convent of St. Anne
2. Convent of St. Clara
3. *Hospitale* (New Hospital or *Nieuwe Gasthuis*)
4. Beguinage
5. *Templum vetus* (Church of St. Hippolyte or Old Church)
6. Convent of St. Agatha
7. City Hall
8. *Templum novum* (Church of St. Ursula or New Church)
9. Franciscan monastery (*Minderbroeders*)
10. Convent of St. Ursula
11. Convent of St. Agnes
12. Convent of St. Barbara
13. *Hospitale vetus* (Old Hospital, *Oude Gasthuis*)
14. *Fratres* (Chapter House of St. Hieronymus)
15. Almshouse and Chapel of the Holy Spirit (*Heilige Geestkapel*)
16. Chapel of the Holy Cross (*Heilige Kruiskapel*)

Not shown in this image, but situated near Delft: to the South-West, the Carthusian monastery; to the South, the cloister of Koningsveld (*Campus Regis*).

Descriptions are partly based on Verhoeven, *Devotie en negotie*, p. 11.

ANNEX

A SURVEY OF INCUNABLES, POST-INCUNABLES AND EARLY PRINTED BOOKS IN DELFT (1477-1572)

This survey is based on the information provided in the Short Title Catalogue of the Netherlands (STCN). Each item has been described using one or more of the following categories, based on the STCN classification, and supplemented where necessary by more specific descriptive terms. The general classification is as follows:

1. Catholic religious literature
 - Bible texts, translations or paraphrases
 - liturgical texts
 - handbooks of practical (esp. moral) theology or Christian doctrine, catechetic or devotional manuals, prayer-books
 - handbooks of Christian ethics, parenesis
 - hagiography, narratives of *miracula*, religious narrative 'histories', etc.
2. Secular literature
 - parenetic treatise
 - vernacular narrative
 - Latin literature, Latin language, education
 - other (history, law, administration, medicine, etc.)
3. Other Christian (Protestant) religious literature
 - Bible translation
 - doctrinal text, etc.

The division into categories is not intended to be absolute, but rather it has been designed as a research instrument to assist in classifying the collective output of Delft printers during the period 1477-1572. The survey is a point of departure for an approximate quantitative analysis of Catholic religious literature both on its own and in relation to other types of literature produced in Delft during this time.

No.	Title, Printer, Year, Bibliographic Information	Description	1.	2.	3.
1.	<i>Hier beghint dat prologus vāder biblē des ouersetters te duytsche vtē latine [...]</i> Delft: Jacob Jacobszoon van der Meer and Mauricius Yemantszoen, 10 January 1477 (CA 290). [Haarlem, Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap 32"1477"-Delf-8216/8217; Haarlem, Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap BM: BN 0.477.018.1+7I; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Thysia 1533].	Bible translation (Old Testament)	•		
2.	<i>Summe le roy of des conincs summe.</i> By Frater Laurentius [Laurent d'Orléans], transl. by Jan van Brederode. Delft: J.J. van der Meer and M. Yemantszoen, 24 April 1478 (CA 1627).	Christian ethics, parenesis	•		
3.	<i>Dit boek leert hoe men bidden zal.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer and M. Yemantszoen], 28 Sept. 1479 (CA 296). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 47].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, catechesis	•		
4.	<i>Historien der heiligher drie coninghen.</i> [<i>Liber de gestis et translatione trium regum.</i>] By Johannes de Hildesheim [Joannes of Hildesheim]. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer and M. Yemantszoon], 14 May 1479 (CA 983). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 46].	History (Bible), narrative, Dutch literature	•		
5.	<i>Die historie, dat leven ende dat regiment des coninc alexanders</i> [<i>Historia Alexandri Magni</i>]. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer and M. Yemantszoen], 20 May 1479 (CA 958).	History (antiquity), narrative, Dutch literature		•	
6.	<i>Vertroostinge des menschen levens uit der heiliger scriften.</i> [<i>Consolatio theologiae</i>]. By Johannes de Tambaco [Johannes Tambucus]. Delft: J.J. van der Meer and M. Yemantszoen, 20 Nov. 1479 (CA 1636). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 48].	Theology, Christian doctrine	•		

7.	<i>Dat leven ons Heren Jesu Christi.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer and M. Yemantszoen], 31 July 1479 (CA 1121).	practical theology (N.T.)	•		
8.	<i>Miraculen onser liever Vrouwen.</i> [Delft: J.J. van der Meer and M. Yemantszoen, between 10 Jan. 1477 and 20 Nov. 1479] (CA 299) . [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 44].	practical theology, Christian doctrine (miracles)	•		
9.	<i>Spiegel des eeuwigen levens and Boec van der biechten.</i> [Delft: J.J. van der Meer], 30 Oct. 1480 (CA(XIII) 1581a). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 52].	practical theology, parenesis	•		
10.	<i>Postilla super epistolas et evangelia.</i> By Guillelmus [Guilelmus Arvernus]. Delft, [J.J. van der Meer], 26 Sept. 1480 (CA 897). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 170 E 1].	practical theology, Bible interpretation (N.T.), Latin	•		
11.	<i>Die duytsche souter</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 12 Febr. 1480 (CA 549). [Nijmegen, University Library Inc. 52]. [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 14].	Theology, Liturgy, Psalter (O.T.)	•		
12.	<i>Getijdenboek.</i> [<i>Horae. Dutch</i>]. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 8 April 1480 (CA 832). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 49].	Theology, Liturgy, Prayer book (<i>Horae</i>)	•		
13.	<i>Parabolen.</i> [<i>Speculum sapientiae</i>]. By Cyrillus [Boniohannes de Messana]. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 20 June 1481 (CA 522). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 51].	Christian ethics	•		
14.	<i>Epistelen ende evangelien metten sermoenen vanden gheheelen iare.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 1481 (CA-Kron I 691a). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 50].	Bible (N.T. Gospels and Epistles – selection)	•		
15.	<i>Epistelen ende evangelien metten sermoenen vanden gheheelen iare.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 1481 (CA 691).	Bible (N.T. Gospels and Epistles – selection)	•		

16.	<i>Confessionale: Defecerunt scrutantes scrutinio.</i> By Antoninus Florentinus. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 1482 (CA 161). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 54].	Christian doctrine, practical theology	•		
17.	<i>Summe le roy of des conincs summe.</i> [<i>Somme des vices et vertus</i>]. By Frater Laurentius [Laurent d'Orléans], transl. by Jan van Brederode. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 14 Dec. 1482 (CA[III] 1629). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 56].	Christian ethics, parenesis	•		
18.	<i>Passionael: Somerstuc.</i> [<i>Legenda aurea sanctorum sive Lombardica historia</i>]. By Jacobus de Voragine. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 9 Aug. 1482 (CA 1759).	Christian doctrine (hagiography)	•		
19.	<i>Cordiale quattuor novissimorum.</i> [Ascribed to Dionysius Carthusiensis and to Gerardus de Vliedervoven]. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 1482 (CA 1297).	Christian doctrine (general theology, catechesis)	•		
20.	<i>Passionael: Winterstuc.</i> [<i>Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive Lombardica historia</i>]. By Jacobus de Voragine. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 5 Sept. 1472 [=1482] (CA 1758).	Christian doctrine (hagiography)	•		
21.	<i>Salicheit der menschen.</i> [<i>Opus tripartitum de praeceptis Decalogi, de confessione et de arte moriendi</i>]. By Johannes Gerson [Jean Charlier de Gerson]. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 1482 (CA 802). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 59].	Christian doctrine (general theology, catechesis)	•		
22.	<i>Somme rural.</i> [<i>Somme rurale</i>]. By Jean Boutillier. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 19 Aug. 1483. (CA[III] 361). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 170 E 3].	Christian ethics, parenesis	•		
23.	<i>Die gesten van Roman.</i> [<i>Gesta Romanorum</i>]. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 18 Nov. 1483 (CA 827).	History (antiquity), narrative		•	

24.	<i>Boek dat men hiet dat scaecspel.</i> [<i>De ludo scachorum</i>]. By Jacobus de Cessolis. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 14 Feb. 1483 (CA 421).	Christian ethics, parenesis	•		
25.	<i>Historie van die seven wise mannen van Romen.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 13 Jan. 1483 (CA 953). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 87].	History (antiquity), narrative		•	
26.	<i>Passionael: Somerstuc.</i> [<i>Legenda aurea sanctorum sive Lombardica historia</i>]. By Jacobus de Voragine. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 13 July 1484 (CA 1761). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 170 E 5 [1]].	Christian doctrine (hagiography)	•		
27.	<i>Passionael: Winterstuc.</i> [<i>Legenda aurea sanctorum sive Lombardica historia</i>]. By Jacobus de Voragine. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 9 Nov. 1484 (CA 1760). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 170 E 2].	Christian doctrine (hagiography)	•		
28.	<i>Ghetyden van onser liever Vrouwen.</i> [<i>Horae Beatae Mariae Virginis</i>]. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 19 July 1484 (CA 833). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 57].	Theology (Christian doctrine); Prayer books	•		
29.	<i>Epistelen ende evangelien mitten sermonen vanden gheheelen jaere.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 1484 (CA 694).	Bible paraphrase (N.T.)	•		
30.	<i>Indulgentia 1484.</i> By Raimundus Peraudi. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer, before 9 April 1484] (CA 1560).	Practical theology, indulgences	•		
31.	<i>Büchlein der Ewigen Weisheit.</i> [Dutch transl.] [By Henricus Suso]. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 18 June 1485 (CA(XIII) 1000a).	Theology (Christian doctrine)	•		
32.	<i>Historie van Reynaert die vos.</i> Edited by Henric van Alckmaer. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 4 June 1485 (CA 977).	Secular literature, animal allegory		•	

33.	<i>De vier uitersten.</i> [<i>Cordiale quattuor novissimorum</i>]. Ascribed to Dionysius Carthusianus and to Gerardus van Vliederhoven. [Delft: J.J. van der Meer], 25 March 1486 (CA 1319).	Theology (Christian doctrine)	•		
34.	<i>De quattuor novissimis.</i> By Dionysius Carthusiensis. [Delft: J.J. van der Meer], 4 Oct. 1486 (CA 582). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 59].	Theology (Christian doctrine)	•		
35.	<i>Vita et transitus.</i> [<i>Epistola de morte Hieronymi</i> . By Eusebius Cremonensis. <i>Epistola de magnificentiis Hieronymi</i> . By Augustinus. <i>De miraculis Hieronymi</i> . By Cyrillus]. [Delft: J.J. van der Meer], 27 Oct. 1486 (CA 710).	Practical theology, hagiography, miracula	•		
36.	<i>De spiritu Guidonis.</i> By Johannes Gobius. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 3 Dec. 1486 (CA-Kron 868).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine (purgatory)	•		
37.	<i>Evangelien ende epistelen vanden ghehelen iare metten sermonen.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 29 Nov. 1486 (CA 696).	Bible paraphrase (N.T.)	•		
38.	<i>De quattuor novissimis.</i> By Dionysius Carthusiensis. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 26 Jan. 1487 (CA 583). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 64].	Theology, Christian doctrine, eschatology	•		
39.	<i>Flores poetarum de virtutibus et vitiis, sive sententiae.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert], 1487 (CA [III p. 29] 751). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 70].	Latin literature, poetry		•	
40.	<i>Leven van Liedwij, die maghet van Schiedam.</i> By Johannes Gerlacus. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert], 3 March 1487 (CA 1123). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 62].	Hagiography	•		
41.	<i>De vier uitersten.</i> [Dionysius Cartusianus and Gerardus de Vliederhoven.] Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert], 13 June 1487 (CA-Kron I 1319a). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 67].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, eschatology	•		

42.	<i>Passionael: Winter - ende somerstuc.</i> By Jacobus de Voragine. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer], 1 March 1487 (CA 1763).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, hagiography	•		
43.	<i>Epistelen ende evangelien mitten sermonen vanden gheheelen iare.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert], 3 Sept. 1487 (CA 698). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 68]	Bible paraphrase (N.T.)	•		
44.	<i>Duytsche souter.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert], 1487 (CA 550). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 15].	Bible text, translation, Psalter (O.T.)	•		
45.	<i>Liden ende die passie ons Heeren Jesu Christi.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert], 18 March 1487 (CA 1160). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 66].	Practical theology, devotional manual	•		
46.	<i>Liden ende die passie ons Heeren Jesu Christi.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert], 2 June 1487 (CA-Kron 1160a).	Practical theology, devotional manual	•		
47.	<i>Twespraec der creaturen.</i> [<i>Dialogus creaturarum moralisatus</i>]. By Nicolaus Pergamenus and Mayno de' Mayneri. Delft: [C. Snellaert], 2 Nov. 1488 (CA 568). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 170 E 9].	Latin language and literature, natural encyclopedia		•	
48.	<i>De vier uitersten.</i> [<i>Cordiale quattuor novissimorum</i>]. [Dionysius Carthusianus (1402/3-1471/2) and Gerardus de Vliederhoven (-1402)]. Delft: [C. Snellaert], 26 June 1488 (CA-KronM 1321).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, eschatology	•		
49.	<i>Epistelen ende evangelien mitten sermonen vanden gheheelen jaere.</i> Delft: [C. Snellaert], 1488 (CA 700).	Bible text, paraphrase (N.T.)	•		
50.	<i>[Tboeck vanden leven Jhesu Christi.</i> [<i>Vita Christi</i>]. By Ludolf von Sachsen. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellart], 22 May 1488 (CA 1182). [Nijmegen, Universiteitsbibliotheek: Inc 40 nr.1].	Bible text, paraphrase (N.T.), theology (Christian doctrine)	•		

51.	<i>Dat sterf boeck.</i> [<i>Ars moriendi</i>]. Delft: [C. Snellaert], 1488 (CA 1619). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 84].	Philosophy, parenesis		•	
52.	<i>Composita verborum.</i> By Johannes de Garlandia (c. 1195-c. 1272) and Johannes Synthen (ca.1450-1533). Delft: [C. Snellaert], 1488 (CA-Kron I 478a).	Latin language and literature		•	
53.	<i>Historye vanden groten coninc Alexandere.</i> [<i>Historia Alexandri Magni</i>]. Delft: [C. Snellaert], 1488 (CA III 959).	Narrative, classical history		•	
54.	<i>Mandata cum clausulis indulgentiarum. Taxa facultatum in indulgentiis contentarum.</i> [Delft: J.J. van der Meer, after 12 Dec. 1483] (CA(XII) 553a).	Practical theology, church admini- stration, indulgences	•		
55.	<i>Den duytschen doctrinael.</i> Delft: [C. Snellaert], 1489 (CA 604). [alt. title: <i>Dietschen doctrinael</i>]	Christian parenesis, practical theology	•		
56.	<i>Passionael winter stuck [-somer stuck].</i> [By Jacobus de Voragine]. Delft: [C. Snellaert], op sinte symon ende iudas aont (Vol. ii: opten vii dach van octobri), 1489 (CA 1765). [Gouda, Streekarchief Midden-Holland, 2306 B 9-10].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine (hagio- graphy)	•		
57.	<i>Karel ende Elegast.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 29 Nov. 1486 and 26 June 1488 (CA 971). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 63]	Chivalric romance, Charlemagne		•	
58.	<i>Liden ende die passie ons Heeren Jesu Christi.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 29 Nov. 1486 and 26 June 1488] (CA-KronM 1160b).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, devotional manual	•		

59.	<i>Spiegel van Sassen.</i> [<i>Sachsenspiegel</i>]. By Eike von Repgow. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 29 Nov. 1486 and 26 June 1488] (CA 1594). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 69].	Law		•	
60.	<i>Van Arent Bosman; een mirakel dat geschiede int jaar 1433 in den lande van Cleve.</i> By Van Arent Bosman. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 29 Nov. 1486 and 26 June 1488] (CA-Kron 355c). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 88]. [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 89].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, (eschatology), miracle	•		
61.	<i>Chronike of historie van Hollant, Zeelant ende Vrieslant ende van den sticht van Utrecht.</i> [Delft: J.J. van der Meer, between 14 Feb. 1483 and 25 March 1486] (CA 506). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 53].	Historical chronicle		•	
62.	<i>Historie van Seghelijn van Jerusalem.</i> [Delft: J.J. van der Meer, between 14 Feb. 1483 and 25 March 1486] (CA 980).	Chivalric romance		•	
63.	<i>Summaria declaratio bullae indulgentiarum ecclesiae Xanctonensi et pro tuitione concessarum.</i> Issued by Pope Sixtus IV [Delft: J.J. van der Meer, between 14 Feb. 1483 and 25 March 1486] (CA 1565).	Practical theology, church administration, indulgence	•		
64.	<i>Quadragesimale: Sertum fidei.</i> By Leonardus de Utino. [Delft: J.J. van der Meer, between 26 Sept. 1480 and Feb. 1483] (CA-Kron (I) 1698a). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 E 57].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine (sermons)	•		
65.	<i>De indulgentiis pro animabus in purgatorio, sive Super declaratione indulgentiarum.</i> By Johannes de Fabrica. [Delft: J.J. van der Meer, between 14 Feb. 1483 and 25 March 1486] (CA-Kron 461).	Practical theology, church administration, indulgence	•		

66.	<i>De indulgentiis pro animabus in purgatorio, sive Super declaratione indulgentiarum.</i> By Johannes de Fabrica. [Delft: J.J. van der Meer, between 14 Feb. 1483 and 25 Mar. 1486 or 1477-83] (CA 727).	Practical theology, church administration, indulgence	•		
67.	<i>Hier beghint een boexken ende heet troest der conscientie.</i> [Delft, J.J. van der Meer, between 14 Feb. 1483 and 25 Mar. 1486] (CA 1684). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 35:3].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine	•		
68.	<i>Tractaetken van cyrurgyen.</i> [alt. title: <i>Chirurgia parva</i>]. By Guido de Cauliaco. [Delft: J.J. van der Meer, between 26 Sept. 1480 and 14 Feb. 1483] (CA 870).	Medicine, surgery		•	
69.	<i>Tractatus de venerabili sacramento.</i> [<i>de corpore Christi</i>]. By Johannes de Turrecremata. Delft: [J.J. van der Meer, between 26 Sept. 1480 and 14 Feb. 1483 or about 1480] (CA 1695). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 58].	Theology, Christian doctrine (the Sacrament of the Eucharist)	•		
70.	<i>Spiegel des eeuwigen levens.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer, between 26 Sept. 1480 and 14 Feb. 1483] (CA 1583).	Practical theology, Christian parenesis	•		
71.	<i>Croon onser liever Vrouwen.</i> Pseudo-Bernardus Claravallensis: <i>Souter O.L.V.; Mantel O.L.V.</i> Delft: [C. Snellaert], 29 March 1490 (CA 331). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 18].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, prayer-book	•		
72.	<i>Spiegel der volcomenheit.</i> [<i>Devote oefening ende bedudenis der missen. Bereydinghe om het H. Sacrament te ontfangen</i>]. By Simon de Venlo. Delft: [C. Snellaert], 29 May 1490 (CA 1578). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 19].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, catechesis	•		

73.	<i>Leven van Liedwijn, die maghet van Schiedam.</i> By Johannes Gerlach. Delft: [C. Snellaert], 11 June 1490 (CA 1124). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 85].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, hagiography	•		
74.	<i>De particulari iudicio Dei.</i> By Dionysius Carthusianus. Delft: [C. Snellaert], 1491 (CA 580 = CA 584). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 72].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, eschatology (judgement of souls)	•		
75.	<i>Hystorie vanden grooten coninck Alexander.</i> [<i>Historia Alexandri Magni</i>]. Delft: [C. Snellaert], 5 Dec. 1491 (CA 960). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 172 C 22]	Narrative, classical history		•	
76.	<i>De gheesteliken minnenbrief die Jesus christus sendet tot synre bruyt.</i> Delft: [C. Snellaert], 10 Aug. [14]91 (CA 1257). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 20].	Theology, Christian doctrine, devotional manual	•		
77.	<i>Historie van Apollonius van Thyro.</i> [alt. title: <i>Historia Appolonii</i>]. Delft: [C. Snellaert], 23 Sept. 1493 (CA 965).	Narrative 'history', classical literature, adventure		•	
78.	<i>Alphabetum divini amoris de elevationi mentis in deum.</i> By Johannes Nider [c. 1380-1483] Delft: C. Snellaert, 6 June 1493 (CA 801). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 24].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine	•		
79.	<i>Gulden litanie vander passien Christi.</i> Delft: C. Snellaert, 16 July 1494 (CA 1171).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, devotional manual	•		

80.	<i>Van de seven droefheden ofte weeden O.L.V.</i> Delft: [C. Snellaert], 17 July 1494 (CA 655). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 22].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, prayer-book	•		
81.	<i>Vocabularius: Gemmula vocabulorum.</i> Delft: [C. Snellaert], 16 April 1494 (CA 796).	Dictionaries; Latin language and literature; Dutch language and literature	•		
82.	<i>Libellus de modo poenitendi et confitendi.</i> By Johannes de Garlandia (c. 1195-c. 1272) and Petrus Blesensis (c. 1135 – c. 1212). Delft: [C. Snellaert], 14 Feb. 1494 (CA-Kron I 1141a).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine (confession and penance)	•		
83.	<i>De octo partibus orationis.</i> [s. <i>Ars minor</i>]. By Aelius Donatus. [Delft: C. Snellaert, 1495] (CA (XII) 652k).	Latin language and literature; education	•		
84.	<i>Physiologus de naturis duodecim animalium.</i> By Theobaldus Episcopus (d. 1171). Delft: C. Snellaert, 1495 (CA 1651). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 76].	Biology, physiology	•		
85.	<i>Liden ende die passie ons Heeren Jesu Christi.</i> [<i>Lijden</i>]. Delft: C. Snellaert, 4 Nov. 1495 (CA 1168).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, devotional manual	•		
86.	<i>Dat boek van Tondalus visioen.</i> [<i>De eius visione, sive de raptu animae</i>]. By Tundalus [Tundale]. Delft: C. Snellaert, 27 Nov. 1495 (CA(I) 1689).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine (eschatology)	•		
87.	<i>De octo partibus orationis.</i> [s. <i>Ars minor</i>]. By Aelius Donatus. [Delft: C. Snellaert, 1495?] (CA 621).	Latin language and literature; education	•		

88.	<i>Missale leodiense.</i> Delft: [C. Snellaert, 1495] (CA (II) 1263). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 170 E 12].	Theology; Liturgical text	•		
89.	<i>Historia septem sapientium Romae.</i> Delft: C. Snellaert, 1495 (CA 951). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 172 C 16].	Latin language and literature, narrative		•	
90.	<i>Epistola mythologica.</i> By Bartholomaeus Coloniensis (1460-1516). Delft: [C. Snellaert, 1495] (CA 252). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 151 F 23; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 73].	Latin language and literature, mythology		•	
91.	<i>Antidotarius animae. Modus confitendi</i> By Nicolaus Salicetus [Nicolaus de Saliceto (-1493)]. Delft: C. Snellaert, 14 April 1495 (CA 1498). [Ghent, University Library 900000176460; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 23].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, devotional handbook, confession	•		
92.	<i>Proverbia seriosa</i> Delft: [C. Snellaert, 1495] (CA 1454).	Latin language and literature		•	
93.	<i>Missale Traiectense.</i> Delft: [C. Snellaert], 1 July 1495 (CA(III) 1262a).	Theology, Liturgical text	•		
94.	<i>Modus legendi abbreviaturas.</i> [STCN: 'Werner von Schussenried (Wernerus Sorotensis) is named as the author in an acrostic in the text']. Delft: [C. Snellaert], 28 Sept. 1495 (CA (II) and CA-Kron II 1267).	Latin language and literature, education		•	
95.	<i>Missale Traiectense.</i> Delft: C. Snellaert, 14 Aug. [1495] (CA 1262). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 170 E 11].	Theology, Liturgical text	•		
96.	<i>Manuale parochialium sacerdotum.</i> [Delft: C. Snellaert], 1496 (CA(I) 1213). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 77].	Theology (Christian doctrine), liturgical manual	•		

97.	<i>Rhetorica pro conficiendis epistolis accommodata.</i> By Paulus Lescherius [Paul Lescher (fl. late 15 th c.)]. Delft: [C. Snellaert], 14 Jan. 1496 (CA-Kron I 1105a). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 170 F 56].	Latin language and literature		•	
98.	<i>Doctrinale</i> [partes III & IV]. [<i>Doctrinale</i> . Part 3-4]. By Alexander de Villa Dei (c. 1170-1250). Delft: C. Snellaert, 1496 (CA-Kron I 131a). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 G 38].	Latin language and literature, education		•	
99.	<i>Formula vivendi canonicorum.</i> By Werner Rolewinck [Werner Rolevinck van Laer (1425-1502)]. Delft: [C. Snellaert], April 1496 (CA 755). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 77].	Theology (Christian doctrine)	•		
100.	<i>Elegantiarum viginti praecepta.</i> [STCN: ‘Sometimes mistakenly attributed to Aegidius Suchtelensis’]. [Delft: C. Snellaert, 1496] [The colophon reads 1516, no doubt erroneously] (CA 668). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 80].	Latin language and literature, education		•	
101.	<i>Expositio hymnorum cum notabili commento</i> Delft: C. Snellaert, 11 Aug. 1496 (CA 722). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 78; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 101].	Bible com- mentary, Psalms (O.T.)	•		
102.	<i>Die historie van Sinte Barbara met die miraculen.</i> [<i>Legenda beatissimae virginis Barbarae</i>]. Delft: [C. Snellaert or Henrick Eckert van Homb- erch], 1497 (CA 966). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 90].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, hagiography, miracles	•		
103.	<i>Van de seven droefheden ofte weeden O.L.V.</i> Delft: [C. Snellaert or H. Eckert], 16 March 1497. (CA 1781 = CA(III) 655a).	Practical theology, Christian- doctrine, devotional manual	•		

104.	<i>Doctrinale</i> [pars II]. By Alexander de Villa Dei (c.1170-1250). [Annotated by J. Synthen]. Delft: [C. Snellaert or H. Eckert], 1497 (CA-Kron I 132a).	Latin language and literature; education		•	
105.	<i>Resolutorium dubiorum circa celebrationem missarum occurrentium</i> . By Johannes de Lapide [Johannes Heynlin (-1496)]. Delft: [C. Snellaert], 1497 (CA 1037). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 25].	Theology Christian doctrine, liturgical treatise	•		
106.	<i>De accentibus syllabarum</i> [De generibus pedum et metrorum]. Delft: [C. Snellaert or H. Eckert van Homberch], 1497 (CA 1445). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 G 39].	Latin language and literature, education		•	
107.	<i>De quattuor virtutibus cardinalibus</i> . [s. <i>De formula honestae vitae</i>]. By Martinus Bracarensis (c.515-580) [STCN: 'possibly an abstract of one of lost works by Lucius Annaeus Seneca']. Delft: [C. Snellaert], April 1497 (CA(II) and CA-Kron II 1515 = 1523).	Philosophy, ethics, parenesis		•	
108.	<i>Summula sacramentorum Raymundi de Pennaforte metrificata</i> . By Magister Adam [Adamus Alderspacensis (-c.1260)]. Delft: [C. Snellaert or H. Eckert van Homberch], 1497 (CA 1468).	Theology, Christian doctrine, canon law	•		
109.	<i>Spiegel des kersten geloofs of der kersten eeuwe</i> . Delft: [C. Snellaert or H. Eckert], 1497 (CA 1589). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 91].	Theology (Christian doctrine)	•		
110.	<i>Die historien ende fabulen van Esopus die leerlic wonderlick ende seer ghenoechlick syn</i> . By Aesop (6 th c. B.C.). Delft: H. Eckert van Homberch, 27 April 1498 (CA 29).	Greek language and literature		•	
111.	<i>Kaetspel gemoraliseert</i> . By Jan van den Berghe (late 14 th c.-1439). Delft: H. Eckert van Homberch, 9 Jan. 1498 (CA 1061). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 151 D 48].	Christian ethics, parenesis	•		

112.	<i>Dat leven ons Heren Jhesu Christi.</i> [<i>Leven ons Heren</i>]. Delft: [H. Eckert von Homberch], 1498 (CA 1120). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 27].	Bible paraphrase (N.T.), Theology (Christian doctrine)	•		
113.	<i>Getijdenboek.</i> [<i>Horae. Dutch</i>]. Delft: H. Eckert van Homberch, 1498 (CA 845). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 26].	Theology, Prayer book (hours)	•		
114.	<i>Die duytsche souter.</i> [<i>Bible Dutch ; Metrical Psalms</i>]. Delft: H. Eckert van Homberch, 1498 (CA 552). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 151 D 13].	Bible translation (O.T.), Psalter	•		
115.	<i>Getijdenboek</i> [<i>Horae. Dutch</i>]. Delft: H. Eckert van Homberch, 1498 (CA 845).	Theology, Prayer book (hours)	•		
116.	<i>Van den leven der heiligen vaderen.</i> [<i>Vitae sanctorum patrum, sive Vitas patrum. Dutch</i>]. Ascribed to Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus (c. 349-420). Delft: H. Eckert van Homberch, 1498 (CA 939). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 171 D 39].	Theology, Christian doctrine, (church history)	•		
117.	<i>Boek van den pelgrim.</i> [<i>Le pèlerinage de la vie humaine. Dutch</i>]. By Guillaume de Digulleville (14 th c.). Delft: H. Eckert van Homberch, 5 April 1498 (CA-Kron 1377).	French literature, practical theology, allegory, Christian parenthesis	•		
118.	<i>Spiegel van Sassen.</i> [<i>Sachsenspiegel. Dutch</i>]. By Eike van Repgow (c.1180-1235). Delft: J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 1 March 1487 and 10 Aug. 1491 (CA(XII) 1595aa). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 55].	Law		•	
119.	<i>De contubernio Francorum regis cum ducissa Britaniae.</i> [Delft: C. Snellaert, after 6 Dec. 1491] (CA(XIII) 495a).	History		•	

120.	<i>Passionael: Winter - ende somerstuc.</i> [<i>Legenda aurea sanctorum, sive Lombardica historia. Dutch.</i>] By Jacobus de Voragine (1229-1298). Delft: H. Eckert van Homberch, Aug. 1499-1500 (CA 1767).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, hagiography	•		
121.	<i>Disticha de moribus.</i> By Dionysius Cato (3 rd or 4 th c.). [Delft: C. Snellaert or H. Eckert van Homberch, between 23 Sept. 1493 and 1500] (CA-Kron I 409a ; Pr(T) 413A).	Latin literature, philosophy; poetry		•	
122.	<i>Hoe men dat huysghesinne regeren sal.</i> [<i>Epistola de gubernatione rei familiaris. Dutch.</i>] By Bernardus [Not by Bernardus Claravallensis (Bernardus van Clairvaux (ca 1090-1153))]. Delft: [C. Snellaert or H. Eckert, between 23 Sept. 1493 and 1500] (CA 269). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 71].	Christian parenesis, household governance	•		
123.	<i>Die vier uterste.</i> [<i>Cordiale quattuor novissimorum. Dutch.</i>] The text is ascribed to Dionysius Carthusianus (1402/3-1471/2) and to Gerardus de Vliederveen (-1402). Delft: H. Eckert van Homberch, between 9 Jan. 1498 and 1500 (CA(II) 585).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, eschatology	•		
124.	<i>Kerstenspiegel.</i> By Dirk Coelde van Munster (Dietrich Kolde (1435-1515)). Delft: [C. Snellaert or H. Eckert, between 23 Sept. 1493 and 1500] CA(I) 599a. [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 21].	Theology (Christian doctrine)	•		
125.	<i>Breviarium Windeshemense.</i> Delft: H. Eckert van Homberch, Aug. 1499 (CA 371). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 170 E 14].	Theology (Christian doctrine); Prayer-book	•		
126.	<i>Doctrinale</i> (pars I). By Alexander de Villa Dei (c.1170-1250). Annotated by A. Hegius (c.1170-1250). [Delft: C. Snellaert or H. Eckert, between 14 April 1495 and 1497] (CA-Kron I 113b).	Latin language and literature; education		•	

127.	<i>Textus sequentiarum</i> [<i>Sequentiae per totum annum cum expositione</i>]. Delft: [C. Snellaert or H. Eckert van Homberch, between 14 April 1495 and 1497 or 1496] (CA 1533). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 75].	Latin language and literature; education		•	
128.	<i>Kerstenspiegel</i> . By Dirk Coelde van Munster (Dietrich Kolde (1435-1515)). Delft: C. Snellaert, [1495 or 1496] (CA(I) 599b).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, catechesis	•		
129.	<i>Van die konste van spreken ende van swighen</i> . [<i>De arte loquendi et tacendi</i> .Dutch]. By Albertanus Causidicus Brixiensis (-1246). Delft: [C. Snellaert, between 23 Sept. 1493 and 14 Jan. 1496] (CA 71).	Parenesis, ethics		•	
130.	<i>Boecxken ghemaect in een maniere van enen spele oft batimente op Elckerlijck</i> . [Elckerlyck]. Delft: [C. Snellaert, between 23 Sept. 1493 and 14 Jan. 1496] (CA (II) 302a = CA(III) 301a).	Dutch language and literature, Christian doctrine, religious allegorical drama	•		
131.	<i>Oratio querulosa contra invasores sacerdotum</i> . By Jacobus Wimpheling (1450-1528). Delft: [C. Snellaert, between 14 Feb. 1494 and 1495] (CA(II) 1333). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 74].	Theology, Christian doctrine	•		
132.	<i>De honderd artikelen van der passien ons Heeren Jhesu Christi</i> . Delft: [C. Snellaert, 14 Febr. 1494-1495] (CA 188).	Bible paraphrase (N.T.), practical theology, Christian doctrine, devotional manual	•		
133.	<i>Oratio quaerulosa contra invasores sacerdotum</i> . By Jacobus Wimpheling (1450-1528). Delft: [C. Snellaert, between 14 Feb. 1494 and 1495] (CA 1332).	Theology, Christian doctrine	•		

134.	<i>Begijnken van Parijs.</i> [Begijntje van Parijs]. [Delft: C. Snellaert, between 23 Sept. 1493 and 27 Nov. 1495] (CA 215). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 150 E 17].	Prose narrative, practical theology, devotional manual	•		
135.	<i>Psalterium.</i> [Delft: C. Snellaert?, 1495?] (CA-Kron I 542a).	Bible text (O.T.), Psalms	•		
136.	<i>Lilium grammaticae.</i> By Wilhelmus Zenders de Wert (15 th c.). Delft: [C. Snellaert, between 14 Feb. 1494 and 1495] (CA 1791).	Latin language and literature, education		•	
137.	<i>Getijdenboek.</i> [<i>Horae. Dutch.</i>]. Delft: [C. Snellaert, between 26 June 1488 and 10 Aug. 1491] (CA 835).	Theology, Christian doctrine, prayer book	•		
138.	<i>Van Arent Bosman; een mirakel dat geschiede int jaar 1433 in den lande van Cleve.</i> By Bosman Arent Bosman (fl. 1433). Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 1 March 1487 and 10 Aug. 1491] (CA 356).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine (eschatology), miracles	•		
139.	<i>Historie van die seven wise mannen van Rome.</i> Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 1 March 1487 and 10 Aug. 1491] (CA 955).	Narrative 'history', Dutch language and literature, transl. from Latin		•	
140.	<i>Kerstenspiegel.</i> By Dirk Coelde van Munster [Dietrich Kolde (1435-1515)]. [Delft: J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 1 March 1487 and 10 Aug. 1491] (CA 599).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, catechesis	•		
141.	<i>De vier uitersten.</i> The text is ascribed to Dionysius Carthusianus (1402/3-1471/2) and to Gerardus de Vliederveen (-1402). Delft: [C. Snellaert, between 26 June 1488 and 10 Aug. 1491] (CA 1322). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 82].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine (eschatology)	•		

142.	<i>Spiegel van Sassen.</i> [<i>Sachsenspiegel. Dutch.</i>] By Eike von Repgow (ca 1180-1235). Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 1 March 1487 and 10 Aug. 1491] (CA 1595).	Law		•	
143.	<i>Van die konste van spreken ende van swighen.</i> [<i>De arte loquendi et tacendi. Dutch.</i>] By Albertanus Causidicus Brixienensis (-1246). Delft: [J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 1 March 1487 and 10 Aug. 1491] (CA 70). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 65].	Parenesis, ethics		•	
144.	<i>Somnia Danielis seu interpretations.</i> [Delft: J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 4 Oct. 1486 and 1491] (CA-Kron 524b).	Bible paraphrase (O.T.), Theology, Bible inter- pretation	•		
145.	<i>Spiegel des kersten geloofs of der kersten eeuw.</i> Delft: [C. Snellaert, between 26 June 1488 and 10 Aug. 1491] (CA 1588). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 86].	Theology (Christian doctrine)	•		
146.	<i>Pronosticacie van desen toecomende iare van 1488.</i> By Jasper Laet [Gaspar Laet de Borchloen senior (fl. 1488-1531)]. [Delft: J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert, between 4 Oct. 1486 and 1491] (CA 1079).	Science (general); Almanac		•	
147.	<i>Spiegel des kersten geloofs of der kersten eeuw.</i> Delft: [C. Snellaert, 1488-1491] (CA 1587). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 169 G 83].	Theology (Christian doctrine)	•		
148.	<i>De duobus amantibus Euryalo et Lucretia.</i> By Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini [Pius II (1405-1464)]. [Delft: J.J. van der Meer or C. Snellaert], 4 Oct. 1486-1491 (CA-Kron I 13a).	Latin literature, narrative		•	
149.	<i>De arte poetica.</i> By Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65-8 v. Chr.). Delft: C. Cornelissen, 20 Dec. 1503 (NK 4441).	Latin language and literature, poetry and poetics		•	

150.	<i>Copia noni maris magni.</i> By Sixtus IV Paus (1414-1484). Delft: H.P. Lettersnijder, 7 Oct. 1508 (NK 664). [Part of: E. Cultrificis (Messemakers), <i>Defensorium et declaration priuilegiorū</i>], [Cambridge, University Library: 150.e.5.4:2; Nijmegen, Universiteitsbibliotheek: P.Inc 372 incomplete]; Utrecht, UB: Rariora F oct.1416:1b (incomplete)]	Christian doctrine, church administration	•		
151.	<i>Tractatul(us) vtilis et cōpēdiosus sup(er) materia indulgēciarum extractus.</i> [<i>Tractatulus super materia indelgentiarum</i> . Abridged]. By Henricus Caligis (fl. 1 st half of the 15 th c.). Delft: H.P. Lettersnider, 20 July 1508 (NK 1047). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 151 D 25; Utrecht, UB: rariora F oct. 416:2 (lacks b6)].	Practical theology, indulgences	•		
152.	<i>Defensorium et declaratio priuilegiorū fratrum mendicātium.</i> By Engelbertus Cultrificis (1430-1492). Delft: H. P. Lettersnijder, 7 Oct. 1508 (NK 664). [Incorporates: Sixtus IV, <i>Copia noui maris magni</i> , 1508]. [Cambridge , University Library: F150.e.5.4; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 231 J 46:4; Nijmegen, Universiteitsbibliotheek: P. Inc. 372 (title-page defective; incomplete; Utrecht,UB: Rariora F oct. 1416:1 (title-page defective; incomplete)].	Practical theology, church administration	•		
153.	<i>Die negen couden.</i> Delft: H.P. Lettersnijder, [before 1510] (NK 623).	Bible paraphrase (N.T.), devotional manual, prayer-book	•		
154.	<i>Commendacie die men leest voor de siecke menscen.</i> [<i>Commendatie</i>] Delft: [H.P. Lettersnijder, [c.1508] (NK 591).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine	•		
155.	<i>Opuscula in laudem dive virginis Marie.</i> By Aegidius Delfus [Gillis van Delft (1488-1516 fl.]. [Delft: C. Cornelissen, c.1503] (NK 4501).	Latin literature, poetry, theology, Christian doctrine	•		

156.	<i>Exhortatio ad concordiam regalem.</i> By Aegidius Delfus [Gillis van Delft (1488-1516 fl.) (STCN: 'lacks title-page?'). [Delft: C. Cornelissen, c.1505?] (NK 4107).	Theology, Christian doctrine	•		
157.	<i>Seven getijden der passien ons Heren met die seven weden onser Vrouwen.</i> [Horae. Dutch]. Delft: H.P. Lettersnijder, 12 Dec. 1510 (NK 1002).	Theology, Christian doctrine, prayer book	•		
158.	<i>Die negen couden.</i> Delft: H.P. Lettersnijder, 17 Febr. 1511 (NK 624). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 227 G 16].	Bible paraphrase (N.T.), devotional manual, prayer-book	•		
159.	<i>Oefeninghen in die seven bloetstortinghen.</i> By Godschalc Rosemondt (-1526). Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, 8 May 1516 (NK 3817).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, devotional manual	•		
160.	<i>Inter Apollinem et Mercurium dialogus fabulosus de prima ciuitatis Delphorum apud Hollandos origine.</i> [Dialogus inter Apollinem et Mercurium de prima ciuitatis Delphorum origine]. By Lucas Nerdenus. Delft: printed and sold by C. Henrici type-founder, quinta nonas [= 1?] Sept. 1517 (NK 1589). [Cambridge, University Library: Norton.d.121; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek pfl 16].	Latin language and literature, Netherlands, Delft, (local) history	•		
161.	<i>In preconium d. virginis Lydiae.</i> By Gerardus Hagius. Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, 1517 (NK 3139).	Theology, Christian doctrine, hagiography	•		

162.	<i>Fascicul(us) mire.</i> [<i>Fasciculus myrrae</i>]. Compiled by 'Een gheestlijcke e(nde) seer verlichte broeder vander minrebroeders oerden van die familie der observanten'. [Edited by M. Wentsen [Matthijs Wentsen (-1543)]]]. Delft: H. Jansoon van woerdē (Hugo Janszoon van Woerden), opten.vi. dach in den maert 1517 (NK 922). [Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit: XC.06276 (lacks title-page); The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 226 E 5].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, devotional manual, prayer-book	•		
163.	<i>Een cransken van minnen.</i> By Een deuote broed(er) vander obseruanciē. Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, Antwerpen, for M. Hillen van Hoochstraten, 20 Oct. 1518 (NK 640) [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 227 G 13].	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, Prayer-book	•		
164.	<i>Litterae confraternitatis datae a°. 1515</i> [s.1516?]. By Volkerus (fl. 1515, prior of the Cistercian monastery of Wageningen). [Delft: H.Janszoon van Woerden, 1515?] (NK 4412).	Practical theology, church administration	•		
165.	<i>Een devote meditatie op die passie ons liefs Heeren.</i> By Bethlem (fl. 15XX). Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, 1520 (NK 316).	Bible paraphrase (N.T.), practical theology, Christian doctrine, devotional manual, prayer-book	•		
166.	<i>Dat nieuwe Testamēt. welc is dat leuende woert Goods.</i> Delft: C.H. Lettersnyder, 9 nov. 1524 (NK 378). [Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit: XC. 05544 (lacks 4.5,k1.8, 2c4; colophon R8 added in writing); The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 227 G 14; The Hague, Museum Meermanno 007 E 008; Haarlem, Museum Enschede BK 7 A 2; Haarlem, Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap 34"1524"-Nieu(Lett) (lacks title-page; prelims incomplete)].	Bible translation (N.T.)	•		

167.	<i>Een sermoen vā die onbegripelijke barmherticheit 'Goods. [De immensa Dei misericordia. Dutch].</i> By D. Erasmus [Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536)]. Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, 1526 (NK 878).	Theology (Christian doctrine)	•		
168.	<i>Paraphrases oft wtlegginghen op S. Paulus Epistele totten Romeynen en op beyde Epistelen totten Corinthen.</i> [<i>Paraphrasis in Novum Testamentum. Dutch. Selection</i>]. By Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536). Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, 1526 (NK 877).	Bible paraphrase (N.T.), Bible commentary, Theology	•		
169.	<i>Hier beghint een corte declaracie en āntwoert [...] teghen zōmighe articulē der lutheranē.</i> [<i>Enchiridion locorum communium adversus lutheranos. Dutch</i>]. By Joannes Eckius [Johannes Eck (1486-1543)]. [Aemstelredā, sold by meester Luyt]. Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, 1527 (NK 752). [Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit XC.05697; The Hague, Museum Meermanno 009 N 016: 02].	Practical theology, Catholic doctrine, polemical treatise	•		
170.	<i>Berch van Calvarien.</i> By Godschalc Rosemond (c.1526). Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, [c.1529] (NK 4183).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, devotional manual	•		
171.	<i>Getijdenboec</i> [<i>Horae. Dutch</i>]. [Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder?, c.1525] (NK 3096).	Theology (Christian doctrine), Prayer book (hours)	•		
172.	<i>Paraphrasis, dat is een uitsprekinghe vander schriften in S. Matheus Evangelie.</i> [<i>Paraphrasis in Novum Testamentum. Dutch. Selection</i>]. By Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536). Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, [c.1523] (NK 2980).	Bible text, paraphrase (N.T.), Bible commentary and inter- pretation	•		

173.	<i>Die negen couden.</i> Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, 1529 (NK 627).	Bible paraphrase (N.T.), devotional manual, prayer-book	•		
174.	<i>Deuoet boexken voer alle deuote personen die gaerne sonder vegeuier ten hemel comen soudent.</i> By Martijn van der Goude (fl. 1 st half of the 16 th c.). Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, [c. 1521] (NK 1497).	Practical theology, Christian doctrine, catechesis	•		
175.	<i>Psalterium Traiectense.</i> Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder; Amsterdam: Jan Severszoon die Croepel; Leiden: Bartholomeus Jacobszoon, 29 Jan. 1530. (NK 345).	Bible text (O.T.), metrical Psalter	•		
176.	<i>Almanack voor het jaer 1532.</i> [<i>Almanak</i>]. Delft: C. Henricksz Lettersnijder, [1532] (NK 037). [Copy in Rijksarchief Gent]	Science (general), almanac		•	
177.	<i>Psalterium.</i> Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, Aug. 1532 (NK 347). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 227 G 17]	Bible text (O.T.), Psalter	•		
178.	<i>Nieuw Testament.</i> Translator/Editor: Martin Luther (1483-1546) [Luther translation]. Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, 25 Oct. 1533 (NK 0160) [Copy in Nijmegen, Berchmanianum].	Bible translation (O.T.), Lutheran			•
179.	<i>Fonteyne des levens.</i> [<i>Fontein</i>]. Ed. and transl. by Willem van Zuylen van Nyevelt (-1543). Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, 1533 (NK 3034).	Practical theology, devotional manual, Protestant			•
180.	<i>Den psalter met verklaringen.</i> Orig. transl. by: Joannes van Campen (1491-1538). [Translated after the Latin translation from the Hebrew into Dutch]. Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder, 13 July 1534 (NK 1206).	Bible translation (O.T.), Psalter, Bible commentary and inter- pretation	•		

181.	<i>Een wtlegghinge oft ouerdenckinge op dē. L. Psalm Miserere mei Deus.</i> <i>[Meditationes in psalmos Miserere. Dutch].</i> By Hieronimus Savonarole [Girolamo Maria Francesco Matteo Savonarola (1452-1498)]. [Delft]: Frans Eversson Sonderdanck, c. 153X (NK 3850). [Nijmegen, Universiteitsbibliotheek: P.Inc 217 (colophon defective)].	Theology, Bible commentary and interpretation (O.T., Psalms)	•		
182.	<i>Die sententie vanden keyser, roerende tstapelrecht der stede van Dordrecht.</i> Delft: C.H. Lettersnijder; den Haghe, sold by C. ians.z. (The Hague: Claes Janssoon), 1541 (TB 5789-5790). [Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek Pfl. 1-26; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 1704 A 5; Haarlem, Stadsbibliotheek 38 B 36; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek Pamflet 1541:11].	Public and social administration; state publications (town privileges)		•	
183.	<i>Dit is eene soete meditatie hoe die verloren siel vanden sone gods gheuonden is met zijnre heylicher passien.</i> <i>[Zoete].</i> Delft: S. ians.z [Simon Jansz, Delft (1542-1569)], den x. julius 1542 (TB 5754). [Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek 976 E 2].	Theology (Christian doctrine)	•		
184.	<i>Copie roerende dē impost in Hollant. Ghegeuen vandē Hove van Hollant.</i> <i>[Kopie].</i> [Indē Hage, sold by C. ians.z. [Janssoon, Claes, s'Gravenhage]. Delft: S. ians.z.[Jansz, Simon, Delft], [1543] (TB 5794). [Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek THYSPF 68; London, British Library: T.1717:6].	Public and social administration; state publications		•	
185.	<i>Een waerachtige nyen tijdinghe, van tghene dat anno duysent vijfhondert ende drienueertich [...] in Ghelderlant gheschiet is.</i> Delft: S. Ians.z. [Simon Jansz (1542-1569)], [1543] (TB 5469). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek pfl 88].	History (Netherlands)		•	

186.	<i>Ordonnancie vā die keyserlijcke mayesteyt, roerende die dootslaghers cessionanten ende banckeroeten.</i> [Ordonnantie]. [Inden Haghe: sold by F. duyck pieters.z. [Frans Duyck Pietersz, The Hague (1544-1546)]]; Delft: S. ians.z. [Simon Jansz], [1544] (TB 5797). [Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek THYSPF 71; London, British Library: T1717:7; Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek I oct 4089].	Public and social administration; state publications		•	
187.	<i>Ordonnancie vā die keyserlijcke mayesteyt, roerende die dootslaghers cessionanten ende banckeroeten.</i> [Ordonnantie]. Delft: S. ians.z. [Simon Jansz (1542-1569)], 19 May 1544. (TB 5796). [Another issue of the edition: Inden Haghe, F. Duyck Pieters.z.; Delft, S. ians.z., 1544]. [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q 2: 28].	Public and social administration; state publications		•	
188.	<i>t Placaet vāde keyserlicke maiesteyt beroerende alle heresijen, ketterijen ende verboden boucken.</i> [Plakkaat]. Delft: S. iansz [Simon Jansz (1542-1569)], [1544] [issued 22 September 1540 and renewed 18 December 1544]. [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Plakk. Q 2: 7].	Public and social administration; state publications		•	
189.	<i>t Placaet vāde keyserlicke maiesteyt beroerende alle heresijen, ketterijen ende verboden boucken.</i> [Plakkaat]. [Inden Haghe, sold by C. ians.z.]. Delft: S. ians.z. [Simon Jansz (1542-1569)] 1544 (TB 5798). [Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek O 84-5:5; Amsterdam, Vrije Universiteit XW.05929; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q2:6; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek THYSPF 73; London, British Library: T.1717:4].	Public and social administration; state publications		•	
190.	<i>Die sentēcie vandē keyser, beroerende den ghemenē coopman vanden Rinschen wijnen, daghelicx binnē der stede vā Dordrecht ter stapele comende.</i> Delft: S. ians.z. [Simon Jansz (1542-1569)]; Dordrecht, sold by F. Bon [Frans Bon], 31 October 1547 (TB 5812). [London, British Library 8079.aaa.1].	Public and social administration; State publications		•	

191.	<i>Den spiegel vā sassē van alle keyserlijcke rechten.</i> [<i>Sachsenspiegel. Dutch.</i>] Delft: S. ians.z. [Simon Jansz (1542-1569)], 16 maerte 1556 (TB 4709).	Law		•	
192.	<i>Een schriftuerlick ghebedeboeck, ghehieten De christelicke practijck vā bidden.</i> By Peter van Slupick. Delft: S. ians.z. [Jansz, Simon (1542-1569)], 5 Nov. 1557 (TB 3967). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 1702 G 28; Nijmegen, Universiteitsbibliotheek OD 641 d 24].	Practical theology, catechesis, devotional manual	•		
193.	<i>Ordonnantie ende placcaete vande coninclijske mayesteyt, beroerende van den goudē ende silueren munten.</i> Delft: S. ians.z. [Simon Jansz (1542-1569)], [1559] (TB 5883). [Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek O 84-5:10; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q 355:11].	Public and social administration, state publications		•	
194.	<i>Placcaet vande. C.M. beroerende de nauigatie ende ordonnantie vander zeeuaert.</i> [<i>Plakkaat</i>]. Delft: S. ians.z. [Simon Jansz (1542-1569)], 31 Oct. 1563. (TB 5926). [Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek 1368 H 22].	Public and social administration, state publications		•	
195.	<i>Placcaet, ende ordonnācie der co. ma. Beroerende de vagabonden, ledichgāgers, en andere quaetdoēders.</i> [<i>Plakkaat</i>]. Delft: S. Jansz. [Simon Jansz (1542-1569)], [1563] (TB 5911/5912). [Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek Pfl. A.7d; The Hague, Gemeentearchief Hgst 2222; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q 4:35; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q 4:36].	Public and social administration, state publications, placard against vagrancy		•	
196.	<i>Placcaet, ordonnācie ende edict der co. ma. Tot extirpatie der secten, ende conseruatie, vā onsen oudē oprechten[!] geloue ende catholijcxsche religie.</i> [<i>Plakkaat</i>]. Delft: S. Jansz, [1563] (TB 5918). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q 4:38].	Public and social administration, state publications, placard against heresy		•	

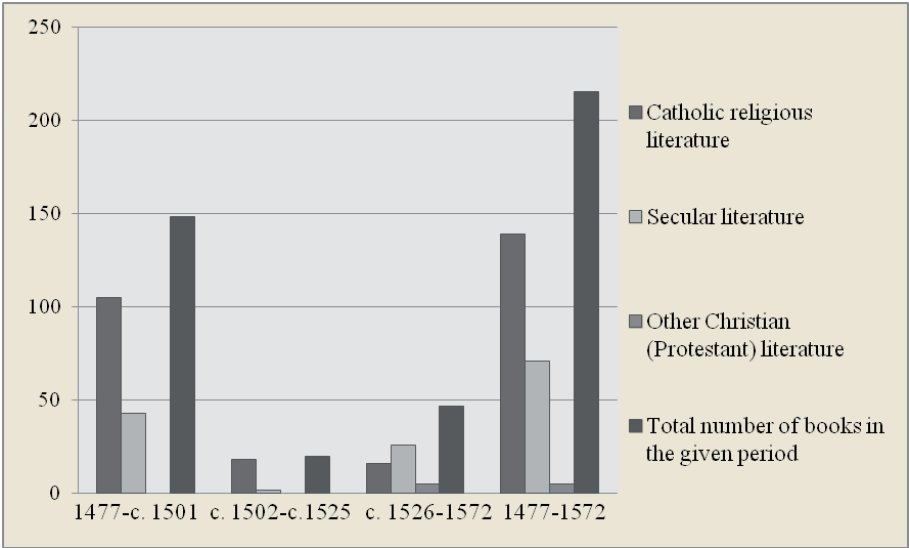
197.	<i>Placcaet ordinantie ende edict der co. mai. Tot extirpatie der secten, ende conservatie van onsen ouden oprechten gheloue ende catholijxsche religie.</i> [Plakkaat]. Delft: Harman Schinckel (1563-1566), [1563] (TB 5915). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q 4:39].	Public and social administration, state publications, placard against heresy		•	
198.	<i>Placcaet, ordonnâcie ende edict der co. ma. Tot extirpatie der secten ende conservatie, van onsen oudē oprechtē geloue ende catholijcxsche religie.</i> Delft: S. ians.z. [Simon Jansz, 1542-1569]], [1563] (TB 5917). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q 4:37; The Hague, Museum Meermannno 145 A 027; Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek THYSPF 105].	Public and social administration, state publications, placard against heresy		•	
199.	<i>De recto medicinæ vsu liber vnus.</i> By Petrus Memmius (1521-1589). Delft: apud H. Schinckelium [Harman Schinckel (1521-1589)], 1564 (TB 3408). [Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek 655 G 10; London, British Library 038. e. 7; Utrecht, Universiteitsbibliotheek O oct.105:4].	Medicine		•	
200.	<i>Placcaet ende ordonnantie der co. may. boroerēde [!] die visscherije vande harinckuaert.</i> Delft: S. Ians.z. [Simon Jansz, 1542-1569]], [1564] (TB 5933). [Amsterdam, UB: 972 G 5].	Public and social administration, state publications, fishery		•	
201.	<i>Phalli, ex fvgorvm genere in Hollandiae sabuletis passim crescentis descriptio, & ad viuum expressa pictura.</i> By Hadrianus Junius. Delphis, apud H. Schinckelium, 1564. [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 1703 B 30; Gouda, Streekarchief Midden Holland: 2306 A 29:6].	Biology, mushrooms and fungi		•	
202.	<i>Placcaet ende ordōnancie der co. ma. beroerende de continuatie vander munte.</i> Delft, printed by S. Jansz. z [Simon Jansz, 1542-1569]], (TB 5931). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q 355: 13].	Public and social administration, state publications, coinage		•	

203.	<i>Placcaet vverworuen</i> [!] <i>byden Staten van Hollandt</i> [...] <i>dat eeghene borghen die gherespondeert ofte be- looft sullen hebben voor eenighe schulde van eenen derden</i> [...] <i>sullen moghen aenghesproecken ofte ge- executeert worden.</i> Delft, printed by S. Jansz. z., [Simon Jansz, 1542-1569)], [1564] (TB 5927). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q 5:2].	Public and social admi- nistration, state publications, debt		•	
204.	<i>Een cort bereytsel, ende lichte maniere om christel- ijcke te biechten.</i> By Wilhelmus Damasi Lindanus Part of W.D. Lindanus, <i>Vanden oprechten gods dienst</i>, 1565 (see below). Delft: H. Schinkel, 1565. [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 1703 F 29:4].	Practical theology	•		
205.	<i>Vanden oprechten gods dienst der heylicher misse.</i> By Wilhelmus Damasi Lindanus Delft: H. Schinkel, 1565 (TB 3128). Incorporates W.D. Lindanus, <i>Een cort bereytsel</i>, 1565 (see above). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 1703 F 29:3-4; Nijmegen, Universiteitsbibliotheek: OD 641 d 18].	Practical theology, liturgy	•		
206.	<i>Placcaet vande conincklijke maiesteyt beroerende ende spreekende vant cooren ende andre greynen.</i> Delft: W. Willemsz, [1565] (TB 5940). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q 5: 8]	Public and social admi- nistration, state publications, agriculture		•	
207.	<i>Catechismus, ofte Onderwijsinghe in de christelicke- leere, gelijk die in kercken ende scholen der cheur vorstelicken Paltz, ghedreuen oft gheleert wort.</i> Heidelberg Catechism, transl. from German to Dutch. [Delft: H. Schinkel], 1565 (TB 1022). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 1714 E 29]	Catechism, practical theology (Lutheran)			•
208.	<i>Bekentenisse of belijdenisse des gheloofs. Int gemeyn, ende eendrachtelicken vāden ghelooighen, die in de Nederlanden ouer al verstroyt zijn.</i> [By Guido de Brès] [Delft, H. Schinkel], 1566. [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 1714 E 19].	Catechism, practical theology (Calvinist)			•

209.	<i>Cantvale novvm atqve insigne Traiectensis dioeceseos.</i> Delphis Batauorum, (colophon: tertio nonas iulias H. Schinkelius exc. et absol.), 1566 (TB 952).	Theology, liturgical works	•		
210.	<i>Catechismus, ofte onderwijsinghe in de christelijke leere</i> Heidelberg Catechism, transl. from German to Dutch. [Delft, H. Schinkel], (colophon: 1567) [Amsterdam, UB: Hss III H 31: 1].	Catechism, practical theology (Lutheran)			•
211.	<i>Placcaet. Beroerende die goeden vande geuangen</i> Delft, Simon Jansz, [1568] (TB 5972).	Public and social admi- nistration, state publications, confiscation of property		•	
212.	<i>Placcaet van geen verstant noch correspondentie te houden, noch hulpe ende bystant te beewijzen [!] den rebelln.</i> Delft: Simon Jansz, [1568] (TB 5975). [The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q 5: 18; Leiden, UB: THYSPF 153].	Public and social admi- nistration, state publications, communica- tion with the Dutch rebels		•	
213.	<i>Een corte en slechte instructie voirden ghemeen man, aengaende die betalinghe en cortinghe vandē hōderstē penninck ouer t landt vā Hollandt.</i> Delft, Willem Willemsz, [1569] (TB 5984). [Amsterdam, Universiteitsbibliotheek Pfl. A.14; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek 1703 B 50].	Public and social admi- nistration, state publications, taxation		•	
214.	<i>Placcaet dat nyemant buyten conincx landen sal moghen gaen studeren [...] wtghesondert binnen Romen.</i> Delft: Simon Jansz, [1569] (TB 5978). [Amsterdam, UB: Pfl. A.12b; The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek plakk. Q 5: 23].	Public and social admi- nistration, state publications, education		•	
215.	<i>Officivm missae, apvd ecclesiam tempore quatuor primorum consilium generalium in vsu fuisse his- torica assertio.</i> By Petrus Opmeer. Antuerpiae, exc. C. Plantinus, [Delft], imp. S. Pauli [Amsterdam, UB: 269 G 21; Nijmegen, Universiteitsbibliotheek: OD TBI 200 C 30].	Theology, liturgical handbook	•		

A Statistic of Incunables, Post-Incunables and Early Printed Books published in Delft from 1477 to 1472 based on this Survey

Category Period	Catholic religious literature	Secular literature	Other Christian (Protestant) Literature	Total number of books in the given period	Catholic religious literature % of total
1. 1477-c. 1501 (nos. 1-148)	105	43	0	148	70.9%
2. c. 1502-c. 1525 (nos. 149-168)	18	2	0	20	90%
3. c. 1526-1572 (nos. 169-215)	16	26	5	47	34%
4. 1477-1572 (nos. 1-215)	139	71	5	215	64%



BIBLIOGRAPHY

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CA	–	Campbell, <i>Annales de la typographie néerlandaise</i>
DVN	–	<i>Digitaal Vrouwenlexicon van Nederland</i>
EK	–	<i>Encyklopedia Katolicka</i>
ILC	–	Van Thienen, Goldfinch, <i>Incunabula Printed in the Low Countries, A Census</i>
MNW	–	<i>Middelnederlandsch Woordenboek</i>
NK	–	Nijhoff, Kronenberg, <i>Nederlandsche bibliographie</i>
NNBW	–	<i>Nieuw Nederlands Biografisch Woordenboek</i>
TB	–	<i>Typographia Batava</i>
TCE	–	<i>The Catholic Encyclopedia</i>
WNT	–	<i>Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal</i>

NOTE ON THE BIBLE TRANSLATION

All passages from the Bible are cited after *The Holy Bible, Douay-Rheims Version* (Challoner revision). This translation is one of the several standard Roman Catholic translations of the Bible in the English language. Its origins go back to the first Roman Catholic translations of the New Testament (rendered into English by Gregory Martin in Douai and published in Rheims in 1582) and of the Old Testament (published in Douai between 1609 and 1610). Since then the text of the Douay-Rheims Version has undergone significant revision, most notably by bishop Richard Challoner between 1749 and 1752; this revised text forms the basis for the edition used in the present study.

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Brussels, Stadsarchief, ms. 3413.
Cracow, Muzeum Czartoryskich ms. 2946.
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2. PRIMARY SOURCES PUBLISHED BEFORE 1800

Note: For a complete list of Incunables, Post-Incunables and Early Printed Books with a Delft imprint published before 1572 see Annex 1.

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- ghehoorsaem zijn sullen, seer profijtelijsk ende oock nootsakelijck voor alle ouders ende jonghers.* Antwerp: Peeter van Tongheren, 1584.
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- nefatibus, Frisis, ac Marsacis, etc.* Leiden: Lowijs Elsevier (I), Jan Bouwens, 1611.
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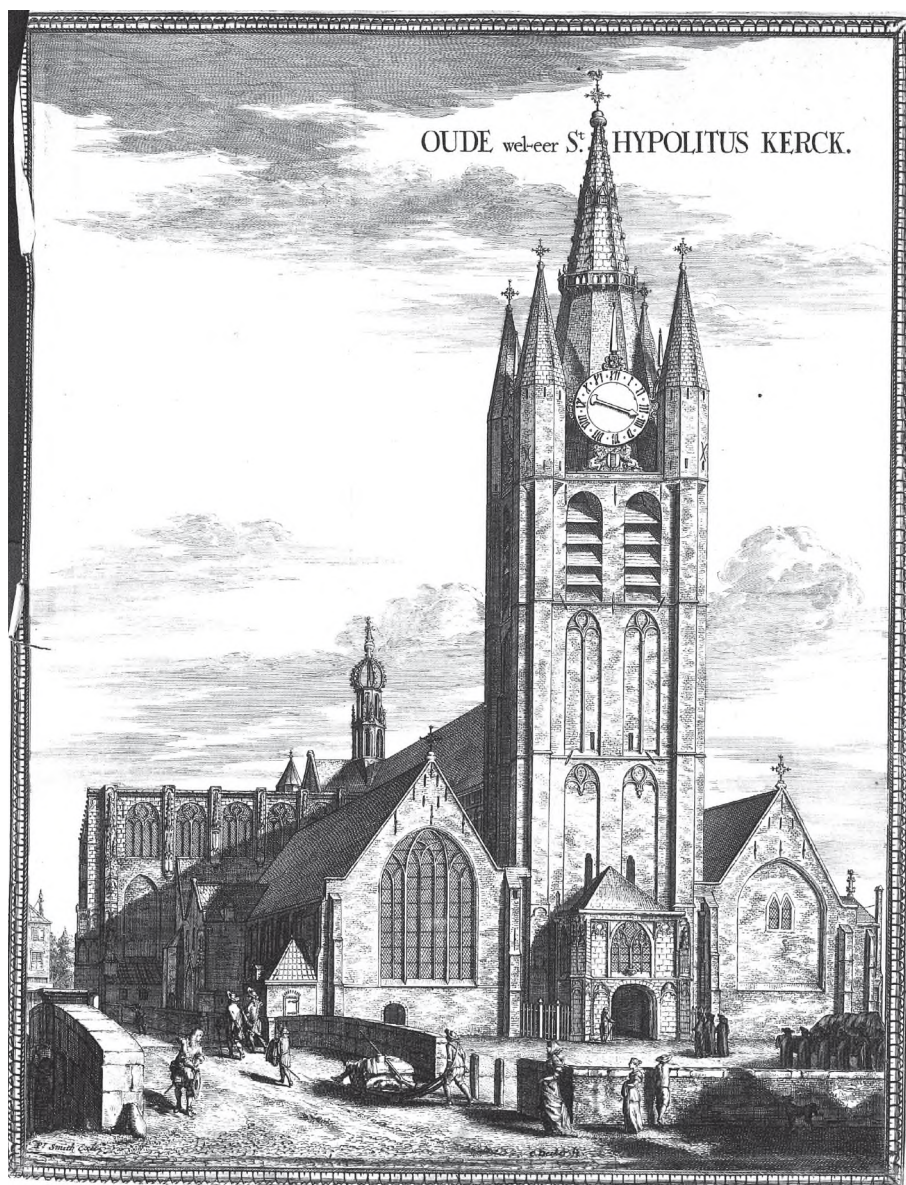
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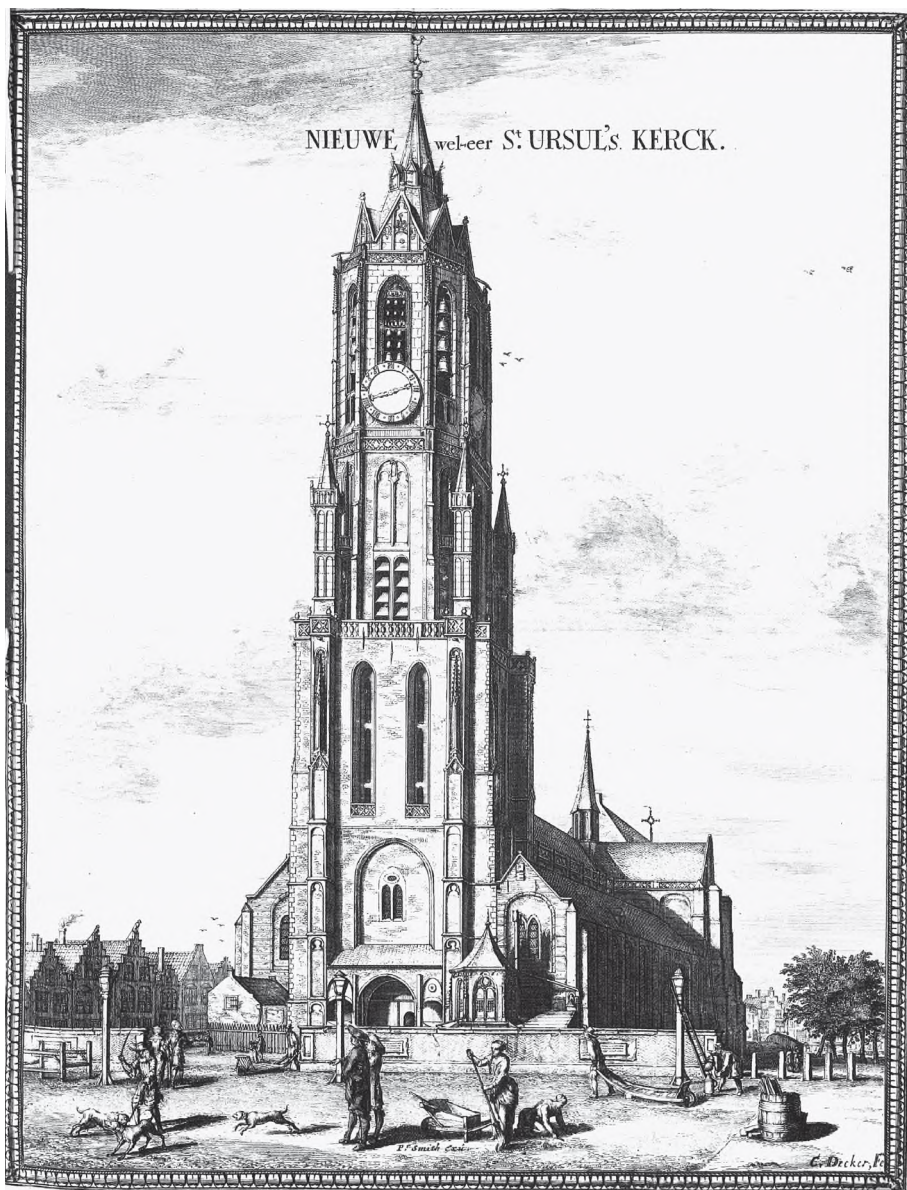
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ILLUSTRATIONS



1. The Old Church in Delft (St. Hippolyte's Church).



2. The New Church in Delft (St. Ursula's Church).



3. The Chapel and Almshouse of the Holy Spirit (present-day appearance).



4. The East Gate.



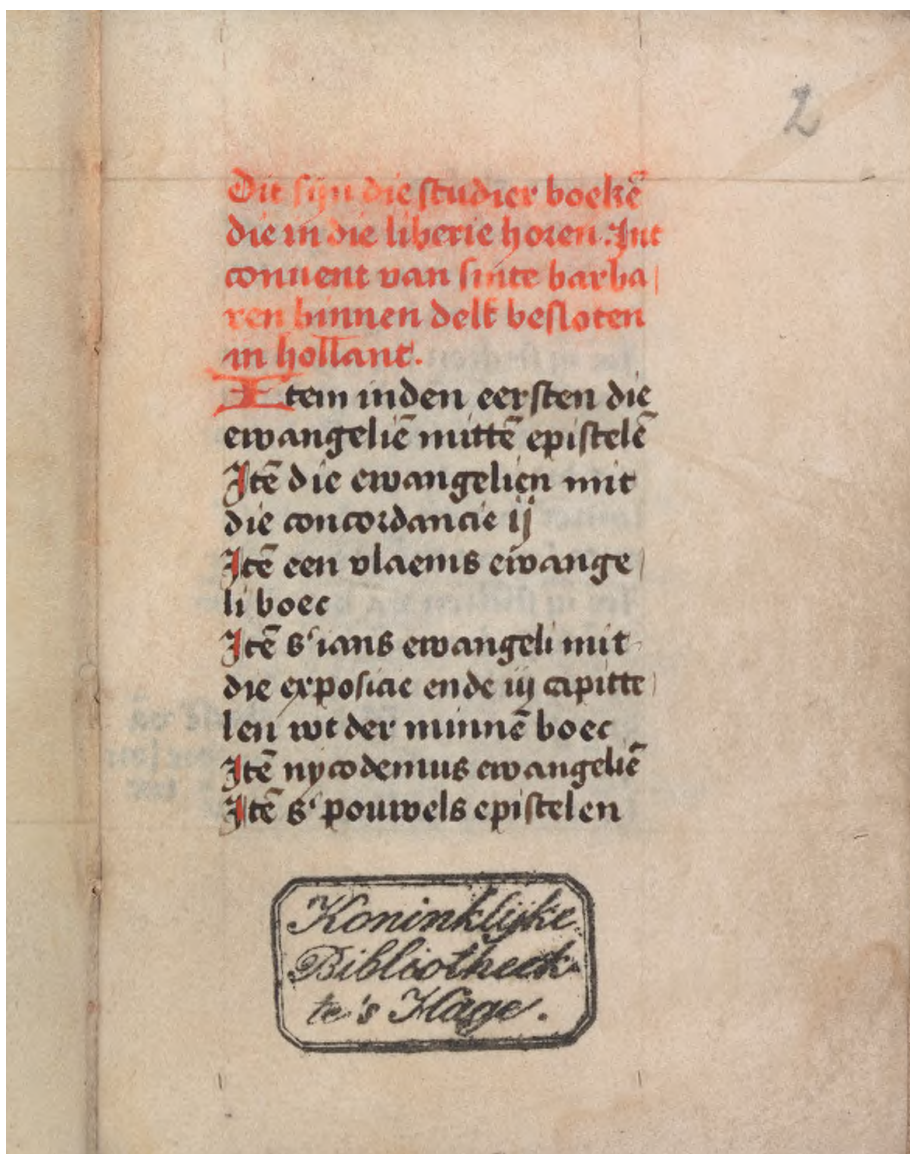
5. St. Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins.



6. The Annunciation.



8. The Hundred Articles of the Passion (detail). The Holy Wounds of Christ.



9. The inventory of the library of St. Barbara's Convent.



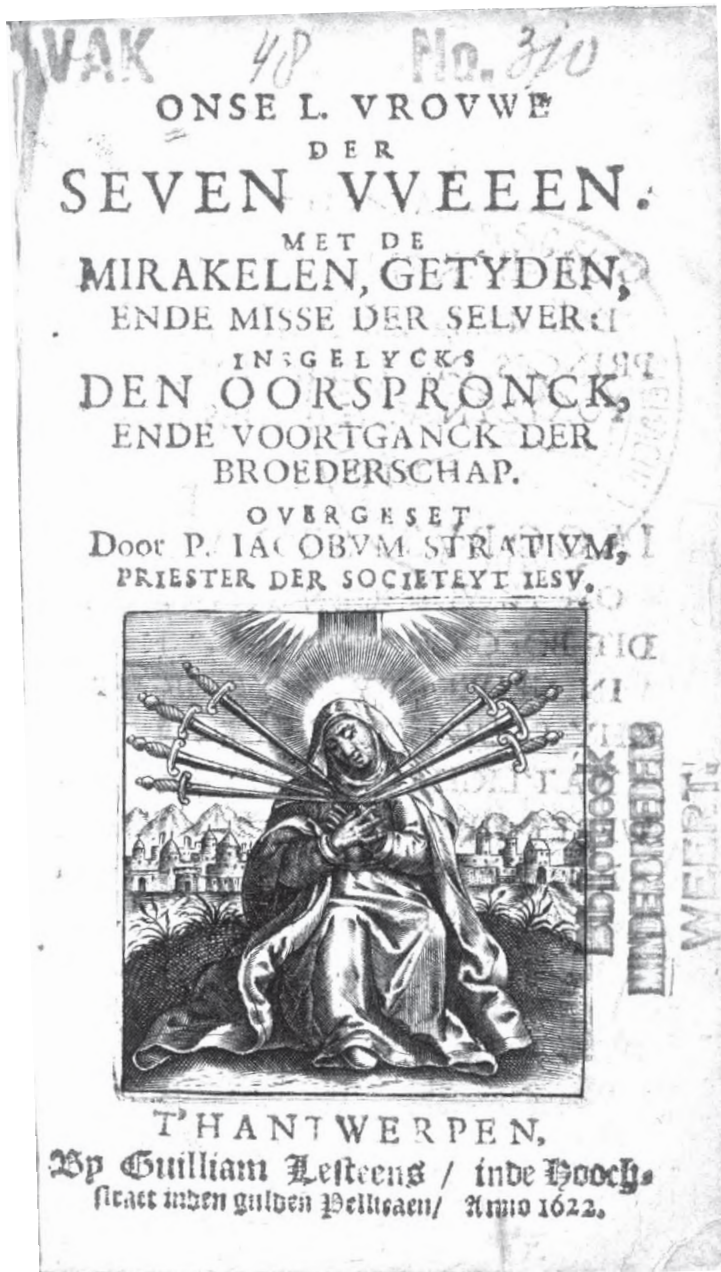
10. Devout contemplation and reading on the title leaf of the *Passionael* (*Aurea legenda*).

Delft In Hollandt



KB
Den Haag

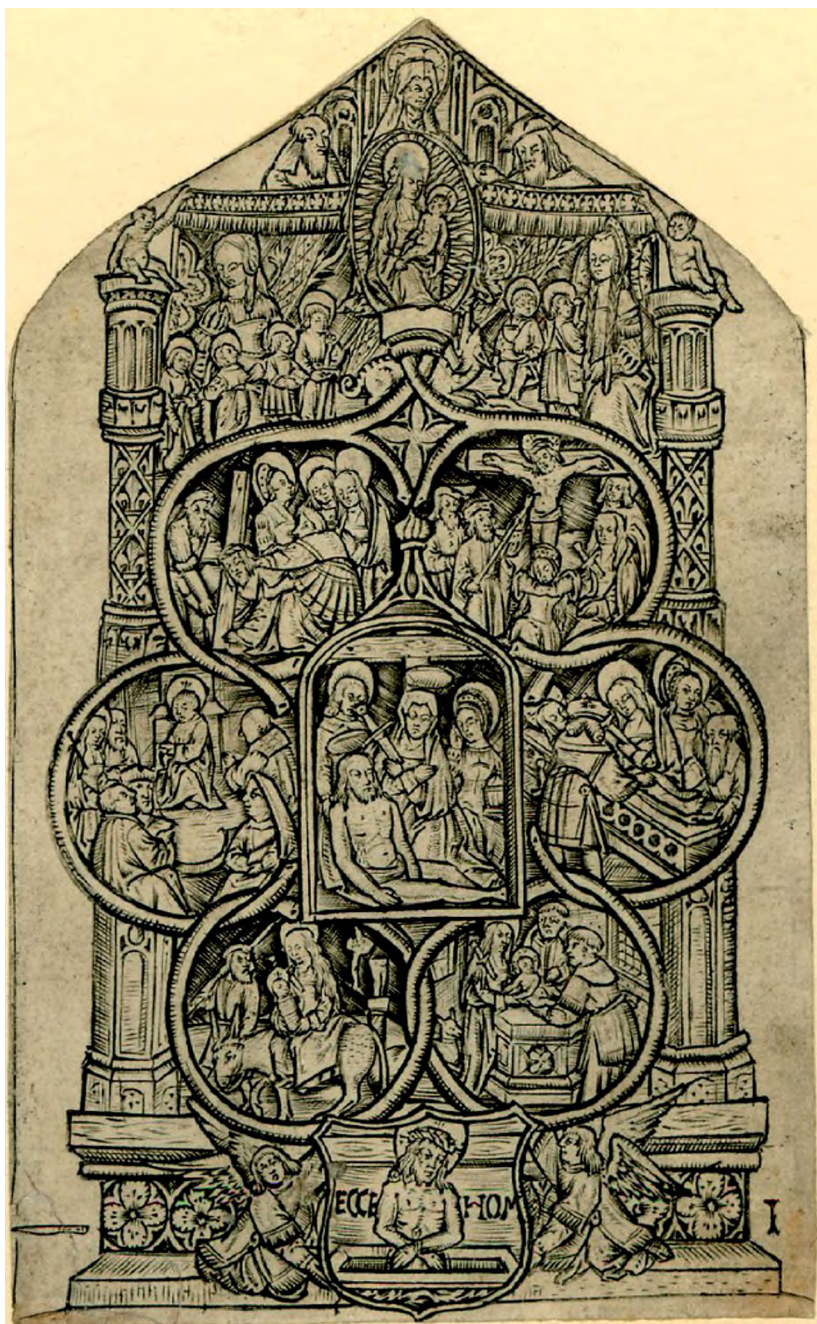
11. The device of the Delft printer Christiaan Snellaert.



12. One of the vernacular sources relating the devotion of the Seven Sorrows in Delft.



13. A devotional print of the Seven Sorrows produced in Delft.



14. A devotional woodcut similar to the Delft prints has been preserved at the British Museum.



15. Maerten van Heemskerck, The Mourning of Christ.



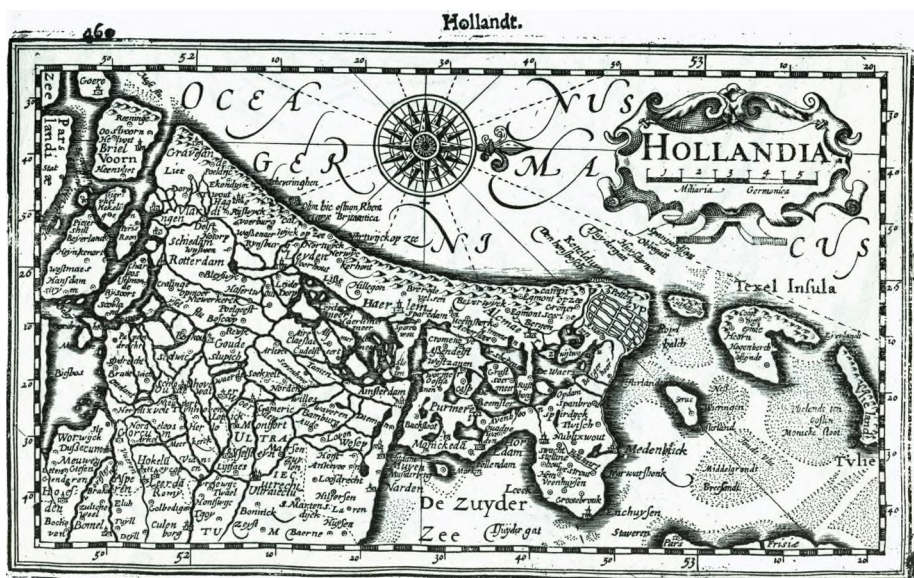
16. Christian and classical themes are united in Lucas Nerdenus' *Inter Apollinem et Mercurium dialogus fabulosus* (1517).



17. The Master of Delft, The Nativity with figures of the Sibyls.



18. Maerten van Heemskerck, The Erythraean Sibyl.



19. Holland in the early 17th century.



20. The Convent of St. Agatha, now Museum Het Prinsenhof in Delft.



21. Cornelius Musius.



22. The relief of Leiden (1574).



23. The assassination of William of Orange (1584).



24. Sasbout Vosmeer.



25. Cornelis and Abraham Bloemaert, St. Willibrord.



26. A vita of the Delft beguine Geertruyd van Oosten, attributed to Sasbout Vosmeer.



27. A nearly-identical etching next to the vita of Geertruyd van Oosten in *Die cronynke van Holland* of Cornelis Aurelius (1517).



28. A nun singing a song similar to the one attributed to Geertruyd van Oosten.



29. A clandestine Roman Catholic church of the Order of the Jesuits in Delft.



30. The title leaf of *Den berch der gheestelicker vreughden* by the Delft-based Jesuit Ludovicus Makeblijde (1618).



31. Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele's *Vrouwelick cieraet van Sint' Agnes verſmaedt* (1622).



32. Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele's *Roomsche Reijs* (1624).



33. Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele's *Gulde-Jaer Ons Heeren Iesu Christi* (1628).



34. Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele's posthumously-published *Gulde-Iaers Feest-dagen* (1635).

FEEST-DAGEN. 771

SINTE HIPPOLITUS,
Martelaer.

XIII. Augusti.

Stem: Als 't begint.

K Ont laet ons in't ghe-
mepn / Met stemmen groot en kleyn/
Dereeren de strijd/ Die Sint Hippolijt,
Op Dupbel en Trian/ Niet sonder
bloed en wan / Doo? Laurens den Levijt.

K Ont laet ons in 't gemepn/
Met stemmen groot en kleyn
Dereeren de strijd/ die Sint Hippolijt,
Op Dupbel en Trian/
Niet sonder bloed en wan/
Doo? Laurens den Levijt.

Lau.

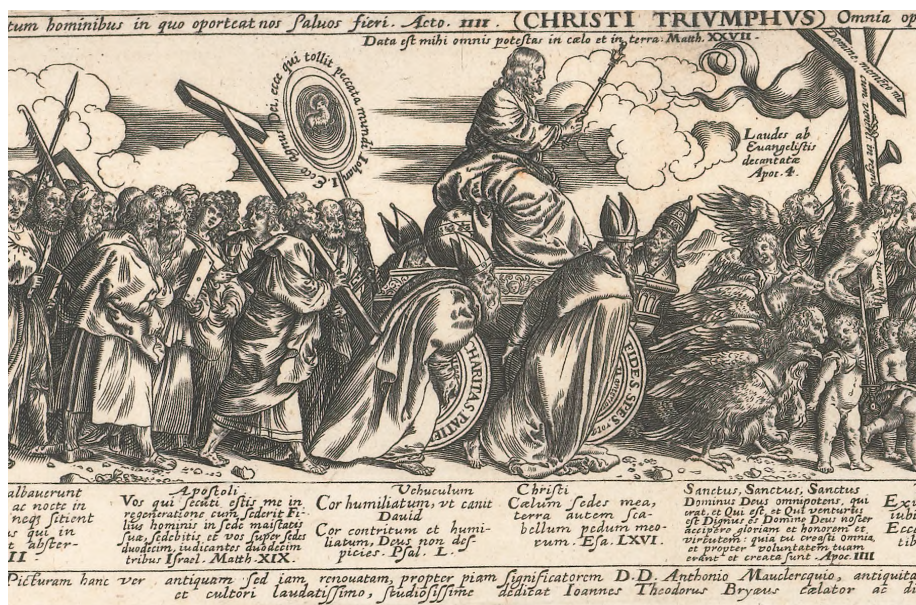
35. Joannes Stalpart van der Wiele's song dedicated to St. Hippolyte.



36. The Triumph of Christ by Johann Theodor de Bry (above and below).



37. The Triumph of Christ by Johann Theodor de Bry (detail – right hand side). The Prophets and other figures of the Old Testament are accompanied by the Sibyls.



38. The Triumph of Christ by Johann Theodor de Bry (detail – center). Christ and the Apostles.



39. The Triumph of Christ by Johann Theodor de Bry (detail – left hand side). The Martyrs and Confessors.